

MUSIC & DRAMA

THE

GRAMOPHONE

NOVEMBER 1956

ONE SHILLING AND SIXPENCE

A
French Opera
conducted
by

Pierre Monteux

Manon

Massenet



VICTORIA DE LOS ANGELES *as Manon*

HENRI LEGAY *as Le Chevalier*

MICHEL DENS *as Lescaut*

JEAN BORTHAYRE *as Le comte des Grieux*

RENÉ HÉRENT *as Guillot de Morfontaine*

JEAN VIEUILLE *as De Brétigny*

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IL TROVATORE



**MARIO
DEL MONACO**

sings Manrico



**RENATA
TEBALDI**

sings Leonora



**GIULIETTA
SIMIONATO**

sings Azucena



**UGO
SAVARESE**

sings the Count di Luna

and supporting cast with

**The Chorus of the Maggio Musicale Fiorentino
and l'Orchestre du Grand Théâtre de Genève**

conducted by **Alberto Erede**

LXT 5260-62

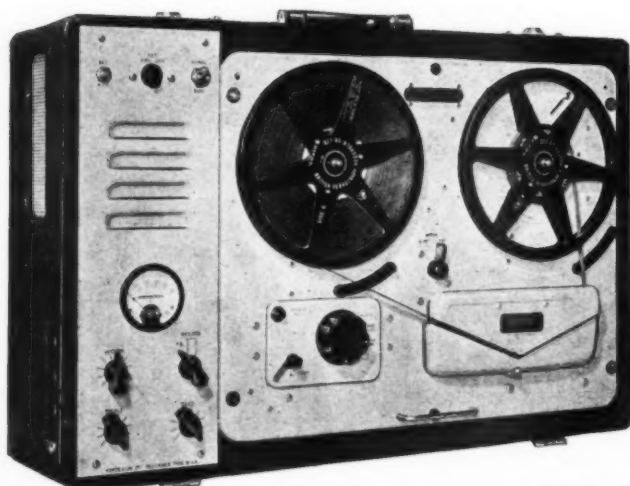
THE DECCA RECORD COMPANY LTD., 1-3 BRIXTON ROAD, LONDON, S.W.9

This new *Trovatore* is particularly noteworthy for the restitution of several passages normally omitted. Amongst these are the duet for Leonora and Manrico following the latter's 'Ah si, ben mio' (Act III, Scene 2); the repeat, later in the same scene, of Manrico's 'Di quella pira', enabling a connecting passage with half-a-dozen bars for Leonora to be included; and the heroine's rarely heard solo 'Tu vedrai che amore' (Act IV, Scene 1).

Il Trovatore is the Italian opera *par excellence*; it is one of the most popular in the repertoire; and it is also one which makes very heavy demands upon the singers. Decca's unparalleled technical resources have here been fully exploited to achieve a recording worthy of this work and of the fine cast, chorus and orchestra specially assembled in Geneva to perform it.



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★ The total hum and noise at 7½ inches per second 50-12,000 c.p.s. unweighted is better than 50 db.

★ The meter fitted for reading signal level will also read bias voltage to enable a level response to be obtained under all circumstances. A control is provided for bias adjustment to compensate low mains or ageing valves.

★ A lower bias lifts the treble response and increases distortion. A high bias attenuates the treble and reduces distortion. The normal setting is inscribed for each instrument.

★ The distortion of the recording amplifier under recording conditions is too low to be accurately measured and is negligible.

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★ The 0.5 megohm input is fully loaded by 18 millivolts and is suitable for crystal P.U.'s, microphone or radio inputs.

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★ The power output is 3.5 watts heavily damped by negative feedback and an oval internal speaker is built in for monitoring purposes.

★ The playback amplifier may be used as a microphone or gramophone amplifier separately or whilst recording is being made.

★ The unit may be left running on record or playback, even with 1,750 ft. reels, with the lid closed.

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"The speaker really does perform as its design intends, and the results are therefore very good indeed. With B.B.C. (via F.M.), and good average LP recordings, the amplifier controls were run flat all the time, showing nothing lacking in the bass and nothing lacking or objectionable in the top response. Solo items, where close to the microphone, bring the soloist into the corner of the room, and large orchestras spread well beyond the confines of the room. Used at high level or lower than normal level the speaker is still satisfying, again showing the response is well maintained at the extremes. Listening produced no fatigue, suggesting very small coloration and white noise tests confirmed that. The design is neat, simple, and well proportioned, and the woodwork (Australian walnut on the one tested) is well finished." (HI-FI NEWS, July '56).



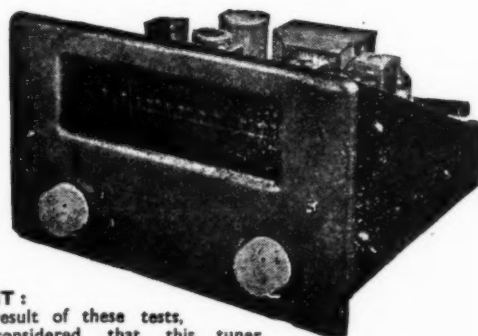
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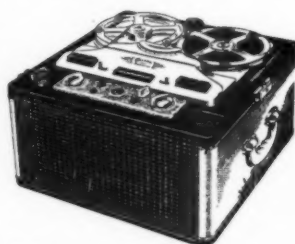
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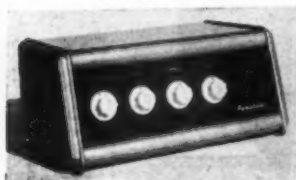
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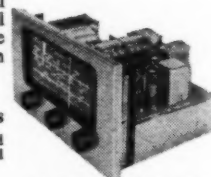


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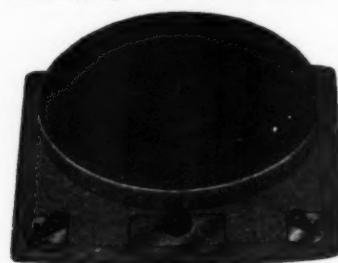
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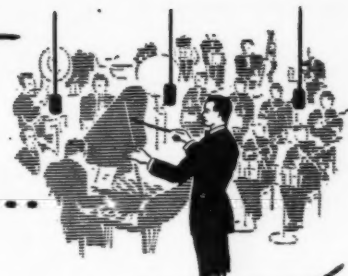
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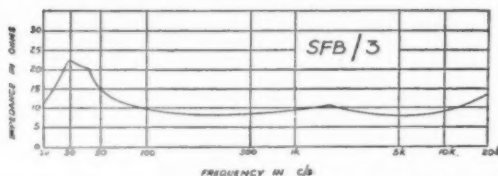
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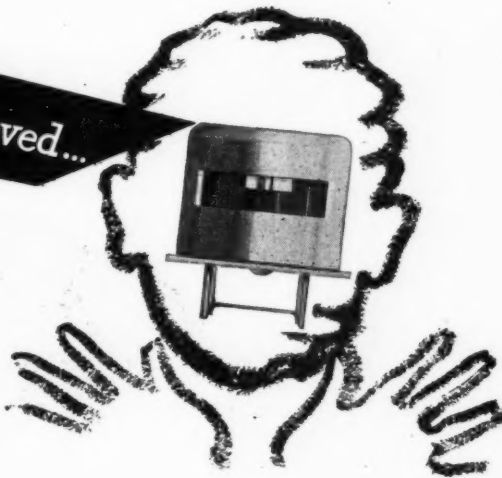
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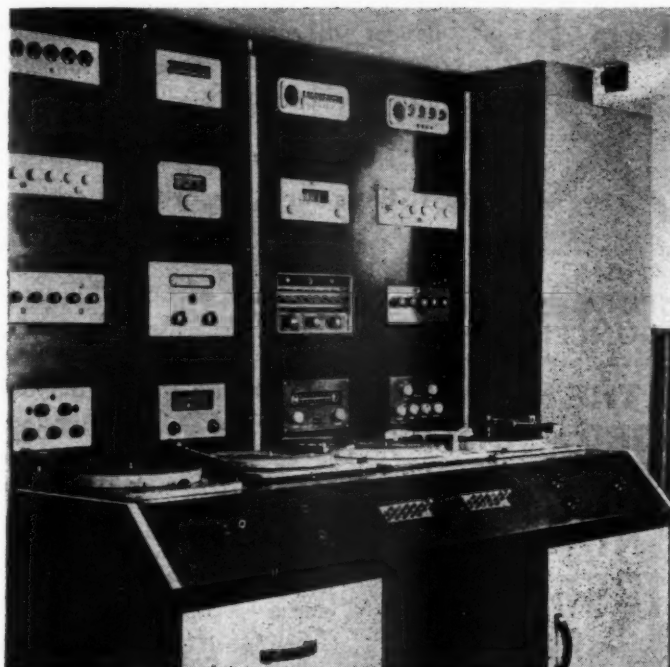
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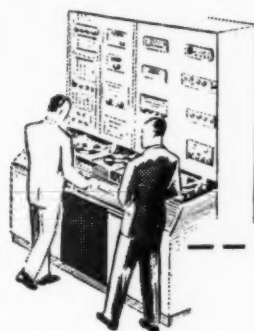


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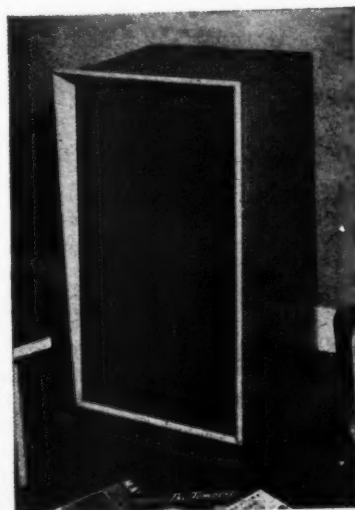
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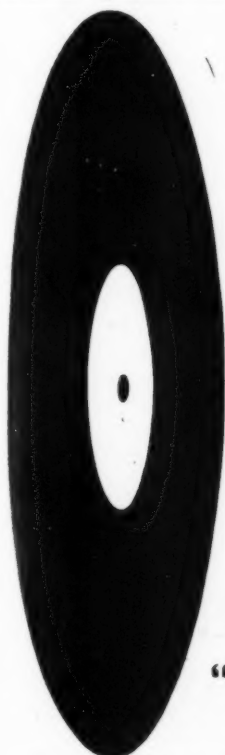
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THE BAROQUE ORGAN AND SOME RECENT RECORDINGS

By GERAINT JONES

THE quest for authenticity in performances of pre-nineteenth-century music is one of the most striking developments in music-making in our time. The substitution of harpsichord and clavichord for the piano in performances of the music of such composers as Bach and Scarlatti is now a commonplace in London. But the violence done to this music by the average performance on the modern piano is negligible when compared with that wrought by the typical nineteenth- and twentieth-century organ on organ music of the same and earlier periods. This seems all the more regrettable when one remembers that very little organ music of consequence has been written since the end of the eighteenth century. The organ is basically too inflexible and unsubtle an instrument for romantic expression, and in the vain attempt to render it more amenable to nineteenth-century musical thought organ builders reduced it from the proud rank of "king of instruments" to that of an ill-favoured monster lurking in one of music's by-ways.

Parry in his *Style in Musical Art* observed that "organs have their special aptitudes and inaptitudes; and the music which is written for them, if it is to attain to any degree of artistic perfection, must be based on a recognition of that fact". It is this achievement of an individual instrumental style that stamps the organ writing of Bach and his predecessors. For its effect this music depends more than anything else on clarity of texture. But the modern instrument obliterates this clarity, substituting for it an impenetrable power which is as much the despair of most musicians as it is the delight of most organists. Readers of this journal will no doubt recall Edward Sackville-West writing in August 1950:

"The past quarter has brought us a number of considerable works by Bach in forms which seem to me to call for comment. Chiefly it is a case of Bach *versus* the modern organ. Ever since the invention of that hideous Minotaur, the great nineteenth-

century organ, executants like Rheinberger and Widor, intoxicated (it would seem) by the sheer weight of sound at their command, have poured out music in comparison with Tchaikovsky's *Finale* are mere tinkling cymbals. That is all very well for those who like it, but when it comes to registering Bach in the same manner, we must protest that a serious misconception has taken place."

Making all allowance for the treatment of the modern organ by the performers under review in that paragraph, there is no doubt that the welcome given by the same critic some months later to my first recordings of Bach on the baroque organ at Steinkirchen was in no small measure due to the aptness of the instrument for the music being played. Outside of this country it has become quite generally accepted that only on such organs does this music come alive. Schweitzer was one of the first to realise this, and in the first twenty years of this century he was outspoken in his condemnation of the wholesale destruction of these early instruments. In France and Germany a new study of the old organs began, and new instruments were built on the lines laid down centuries before by Praetorius, Dom Bédos and others. Subsequently in America many similar organs were built, and in quite recent years there have been hotly opposed moves in the same direction in this country, with the much discussed Royal Festival Hall organ as a starting point.

The organ developed from very primitive beginnings into a complete instrument very early in Germany. Organs of three keyboards and pedals with 50 or 60 stops including independent pedal departments from 32 ft. stops to mixtures are found as early as 1600. On each manual the stops were divided into two sections; those with pipes of narrow scale described as male, and those of wide scale described as female. The former stops comprised the main open chorus of unisons and quints (equivalent to

the diapason chorus of the modern organ); the latter the corresponding members of the flute family. There were also reed stops of both families. The stops of the various manuals differed only slightly from each other in power (in direct contrast to modern practice), but each department was appreciably different in colour, and antiphonal contrasts were often enhanced by the siting of the various groups of stops. The old tracker action gives the performer a degree of control over the actual speech of the pipes which is entirely absent from modern pneumatic or electric consoles, and the "voicing" of the pipes themselves incorporates an attack, akin to the bowing of stringed instruments, which imparts to the sound a vitality entirely lacking in the sluggish speech of the typical modern instrument. It is this absence of "bite" which is responsible for much of the over-fast organ playing one now so often hears, and for the apparent "dullness" of so much slow music of the baroque period when played on the modern organ. Being unclosed in swell boxes, the stops of the female family have a clarity, both in solo and accompaniment, which the performer finds it well-nigh impossible to reproduce on modern instruments, and which have an expressive quality all of their own.

A number of LP recordings of this type of instrument have appeared comparatively recently, several of which are well worthy of attention. The North German school of organ-building which reached its zenith in the instruments of Arp Schnitger (1648-1718) is represented in some recordings of Helmut Walcha made at Cappel, a small village not far from Cuxhaven, by D.G.G. in their Archive Series. The best of these are, I think, APM14021-2, on which he plays the whole of Bach's *Orgelbüchlein*—"A Little Organ Book, wherein the beginner may learn to perform chorals of every kind and also acquire skill in the use of the Pedal, which is treated uniformly obligato throughout" (Terry's translation). A number of Walcha's tempi are debatable, in the case of the marvellous prelude on *O Mensch bewein* definitely so far wide of the mark as to destroy the mood of the piece for me, and one tires of his over-indulgence in staccato playing. But the majority of the preludes are well played, and, despite the starkness of the acoustics of the church,

which the recording does nothing to mitigate, a reasonably faithful reproduction of the many beauties of this instrument is given.

For those who would prefer a selection from the Orgelbüchlein coupled with a variety of Bach's other organ music, there are two Telefunken discs (LGM65008-9), including some of the Eighteen Choral Preludes and a few items from the Art of Fugue. These are played by one of the most distinguished German organists of our time, the late Fritz Heitmann, on the organs of the Ernst Moritz Church, Berlin Zehlendorf, and the crypt of Berlin Cathedral. The Orgelbüchlein side has some annoying pre-echo, but the preludes are well chosen, and the performance of *O Mensch bewein* is a great improvement on Walcha's.

Two discs from Nixa (PLP224-1/2) offer at first sight a most attractive array—the famous Gabler organs at Weingarten and Ochsenhausen, the equally famous Riepp organ at Ottobeuren, with the late eighteenth-century Holzhey instrument at Rot an der Rot added for good measure. The Weingarten instrument, built between 1737-50, and that at Ottobeuren (1754-66) are the high-watermarks of South German organ-building, and it is a great pity that these recordings are not more worthwhile. There are quite acceptable accounts of a Choral-Partita by J. G. Walther (a cousin of J. S. Bach) on the Ottobeuren organ, and a similar work by Pachelbel on the Rot an der Rot instrument (PLP224-2); but the rest of this record is filled with indifferent Bach, Steigleder, etc., played on loud or very loud stop combinations recorded so resonantly as to result in just that confusion against which Mr. Sackville-West and others have inveighed in these columns. PLP224-1 offers an even stiffer dose of this, and the work that could have saved the record—Sweelinck's beautiful set of variations on *Mein junges Leben hat ein End*—is given a performance whose tempi and style I can only think grotesque.

A Bach recital by Anton Nowakowski at the organ of the Klosterkirche an Soro, Denmark, is spoiled for similar reasons, though the playing is very competent. The programme is ill-chosen; a side consisting of the "Little" E minor Prelude and Fugue (loud throughout—quite properly) followed by the Fantasia in G (also nearly all loud—quite properly) becomes very tiring to the listener. The performance of the Prelude and Fugue is all the time a shade hurried, the text used is not above reproach, including a spurious bar in the prelude, and the simple majesty of the fugue is destroyed by the flippant execution of the all-important ornament in its subject. On the other side of the disc is the Passacaglia and Fugue. This begins promisingly, but all too soon the mixture stops make their appearance, and one is irritated by the constant use of very high registers (often even confusing one's sense of pitch), and occasional pauses to accommodate changes of stops. In the building this performance probably sounded a good deal clearer than it does on the record, but this disc (Telefunken LGM 65030) provides (like the Nixa ones above

mentioned) gratuitous ammunition for those who denigrate the organ.

On PLP586 Nixa offer a fine programme of Old Italian Masters excellently played by Flor Peeters on the organ of St. Jans, Gouda; a splendid instrument built between 1732-6 by Jean Moreau of Rotterdam. Included are works by Andrea and Giovanni Gabrieli, Palestrina, Cavazzoni, Frescobaldi and other sixteenth-century composers, ending with a Prelude and Fugue by the eighteenth-century Padre Martini. This is a fine record of music not often heard, and is warmly recommended. (Unfortunately, the record was deleted on September 30th, 1956.—Ed.)

France has suffered more severely than any other country where the destruction of historic organs is concerned. It is therefore

the more pleasant to be able to end these notes with mention of an excellent recording of Couperin's *Messe à l'usage ordinaire des paroisses pour les fêtes solennelles*. This work, twenty-one pieces in all, some severely wedded to plainchant, others reminiscent of the charm and sparkle of the harpsichord *ordres*, is played by Gaston Litaize on the famous organ of Saint-Merri. M. Litaize's rhythm sometimes encompasses a degree of freedom which some might describe as licence, and in common with all French organists nowadays he uses the pedals in these pieces far more freely than the composer either could, or, one feels, would have wished to do. But this is none the less a very welcome record, issued by Ducretet-Thomson on DTL93039.

LOIS MARSHALL



LAST May London concert-goers at the Festival Hall heard the voice of Lois Marshall for the first time in this country at a Beecham-Mozart concert in which she sang the Motet "Exsultate Jubilate" and "Marter aller Arten" from *Die Entführung*. Toscanini enthusiasts, of course, were familiar with her voice before then with the H.M.V. recording of Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis*. This month her first records for Columbia are released in which she sings the Queen of Sheba in Sir Thomas Beecham's revised version of Handel's "Solomon".

This young Canadian soprano was born in Toronto and although her environment was not a particularly musical one, she nevertheless became interested in music while still a child through her elder brother taking singing lessons and also with a family collection of gramophone records. This latter, she has said, was particularly useful in helping her to establish a musical memory and it was her delight to sing with whichever soloist happened to be on the record. Deciding that music was to be her career, Lois Marshall later entered the Royal Conservatoire of Toronto where she

studied under Weldon Kilburn, who from that time on has done much to further her career.

Leaving the Conservatoire Lois became a professional singer in 1948, and three years later won the coveted Naumburg Award—a most important event in her career, which entitled her to an official New York debut to which all the leading New York critics were invited—a most formidable moment for this young singer. Following an unqualified success with the critics, Lois then embarked on a tour of the United States and in the following year was approached by Toscanini who was then looking for a soprano to take part in a performance of Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis* which was also to be recorded. An audition was arranged and afterwards Lois learnt that she had more than met with the maestro's approval. The story goes that during the audition Toscanini was murmuring "Brava" before she had gone very far, and "Bravissima" at the end. Toscanini, she describes as a person both fabulous and terrifying, but her experience of the *Missa Solemnis* performance is one she will never forget and the results made her fears almost bearable.

Following this first really great success Lois then departed on a second tour and this time appeared as soloist with some of the principal American orchestras and conductors, including Munch and the Boston Symphony, Reiner and the Chicago Symphony and Jorda and the San Francisco Symphony orchestras. Having thus "arrived" and established her name in America she inevitably began to look in the direction of Europe. Strangely enough, the opportunity occurred during a sojourn in Cleveland and became another vital moment in her life comparable only to that of the Toscanini episode and was the deciding factor which eventually brought her to London and the Continent.

Sir Thomas Beecham, then on an extensive concert tour of the United States and Canada, was endeavouring to find a suitable soprano to sing the part of the Queen of Sheba for his recording of

"Solomon" and it was in Cleveland that the paths of Sir Thomas Beecham and Lois Marshall crossed. So impressed was Beecham when he heard her sing that he arranged to have her auditioned immediately.

Hearing her sing "Marten aller Arten" a little later in Toronto made him decide to bring her to England for concerts and recordings, and so her English debut was planned.

Living in her West London flat which she took during her stay in this country, and speaking with her soft Canadian accent, she regretted that engagements had not made it possible for her to see as much of England as she would have liked and admitted that the only time she had so far visited Glyndebourne was for business purposes only and was unable to stay to a performance. Nevertheless, living in London for a short while has afforded her an opportunity of getting to know it a little and she speaks warmly of its friendly atmosphere.

Back in Canada, Lois has a flat in

Toronto, and although these days there is little chance of living there for long, it is filled with books and gramophone records which include most of the recorded lieder recitals by Fischer-Dieskau and various works recorded by Sir Thomas Beecham.

So far as the culinary arts are concerned, Lois is particularly fond of her kitchen, and is never so happy as when she has time to prepare large meals; Weldon Kilburn, her accompanist and tutor, speaks most enthusiastically of "beef stew à la Marshall". Never far away from the flat is "Greensleeves", her Buick, bought as a result of her first major American tour.

Although her concert and record repertoire in this country has so far been confined to Handel and Mozart, she is greatly interested in modern works and has sung in performances of Carl Orff's *Carmina Burana* and Samuel Barber's *Prayers of Kierkegaard* and thinks Benjamin Britten the most interesting British composer. She particularly admires his arrangement of Folk Songs, and considers *Peter Grimes* undoubtedly his greatest opera.

LETTER FROM AMERICA

By HAROLD C. SCHONBERG

AFTER a relatively opera-less summer on discs, the dikes are down again, and Victor has led the way to the fall season with three full-scale releases of popular operas—Puccini's *La Bohème*, Verdi's *La Traviata* and Massenet's *Manon*. The two *Bohème* discs have a star conductor and some star singers. Sir Thomas Beecham is at the helm, and under him are Victoria de los Angeles, Jussi Björling, Robert Merrill and Lucine Amara, with the Victor Symphony. There are some magnificent things in this set, but on the whole it just misses the top. Björling's voice is not that of a young man any longer; and while de los Angeles sings sweetly, as always, she sounds relatively dispassionate and sexless. Nor is Amara's tame version of the Musetta waltz much of an asset. Victor has given the orchestra unusual prominence, and Beecham makes a lively affair of some sections of the score.

The role of Manon is much better suited to de los Angeles. In this four-disc set her fellow-principals are Henri Legay (as des Grieux) and Michel Dens, with the Paris Opera Orchestra and Chorus under Pierre Monteux. Some of the soprano's work here is sheerly ravishing, while Legay supports her vibrantly. The orchestra under Monteux sounds supple and aristocratic. Altogether a splendid job—easily the best version of the opera ever brought to records. Monteux also is the conductor of the Rome Opera House orchestra in the three-disc *Traviata*, which features Rosanna Carteri as Violetta, Cesare Valletti as Alfredo and Leonard Warren as Germont. If Carteri is not wholly convincing as Violetta, the same can be said of every singer who has attempted the role on LP (has any opera

house in the world seen a great Violetta since the days of Bori?). Carteri has temperament, but her voice is not a caressing instrument and her coloratura is shrill and off-centre. The other singers are excellent, Valletti especially, and Monteux conducts as though he has been leading *Traviata* all his life. Victor has packaged the entire Dumas novel with the album set.

The Stella-Stefano-Serafin *La Traviata*, released in England several months ago, has come out in America on the Angel label. Here too is a performance with deficiencies. Stella is unsteady and not very interesting. Much more palatable is Angel's three-disc set of Cimarosa's *Matrimonio Segreto* with Piccola Scala performers—Graziella Sciutti, Ebe Stignani, Carlo Badioli, Luigi Alva and others—under the direction of Nino Sanzogno. The performance is light, spirited and fluffy, as it should be, and the set features some unusually attractive singing. Sciutti and Alva make a fine-sounding young couple; the soprano, in particular, has one of the freshest voices that has come to records in some time.

Rounding out the operatic sets is Prokofiev's *Love of Three Oranges*, on two Epic discs featuring soloists, chorus and orchestra of the Slovene National Opera conducted by Bogo Leskovich. The performance is sung in Russian (I guess), and the singing varies from excellent to impossible. A few of the men have remarkable quavers. It is surprising how many Slavic voices wobble like a cork on a rough sea. Good recorded sound here.

For some reason this has been concerto month in America. Victor has released Artur Schnabel in a two-disc set, playing the Grieg Concerto, Liszt's E flat, Rach-

maninov's No. 2 and the same composer's *Rhapsody on a Theme by Paganini*. Fritz Reiner and Alfred Wallenstein are the conductors. This is piano playing by an authentic old master. You may point out a sloppy passage here and there, but what ardour, freedom and brilliance are there in these performances! Columbia has Casadesu and the New York Philharmonic under Mitropoulos in Beethoven's *Emperor*: a fleet and elegant performance lacking in depth and not too well recorded. Nor do Serkin and the Philadelphia Orchestra under Ormandy get top-notch recording in Brahms's Piano Concerto No. 2 (Columbia), though Serkin's performance has its usual style and power. Two more concerto recordings from Columbia feature violinists—the Brahms D major Concerto with Francescatti, and a coupling of Lalo's *Symphonie Espagnole* (all five movements) and Bruch's G minor with Isaac Stern. Ormandy leads the Philadelphia Orchestra in all of these. Francescatti just avoids vulgarity in his Brahms; lately he has been using more and more vibrato, with a consequent lessening in musical subtlety. Stern is clear, objective and nowhere near as sugary in the two works he plays.

The Schumann Piano Concerto with Gieseking, von Karajan and the Philharmonia Orchestra has been released by Angel (with Schumann's *Kinderszenen* on the B side of the disc), and it is quite a disappointing issue. Gieseking never sounded more mannered, nor is his playing a model of technical correctness. And the Bach Two-Violin Concerto, also on an Angel disc featuring Leonid Kogan and Elisabeth Gilels, appears to me a perfect illustration of how not to play Bach. The violinistics proper are fine, but the spirit is altogether middle nineteenth century. On a London disc, Campoli is the expert soloist in the Bliss Violin Concerto, an eclectic work stemming from Prokofiev, and on another London record Gulda is the methodical and unimaginative pianist in Mozart's Concertos Nos. 25 and 26, with the New Symphony under Collins. Paul Badura-Skoda, on a Westminster disc, does not get very far with the Tchaikovsky Piano Concerto in B flat minor. Another Westminster disc presents the Russian pianist, Alexander Iokheles, in piano concertos by Otar Taktakishvili and Otar Gordelli, two contemporary Soviet composers who happily plunder the past. Iokheles sounds like too brilliant a pianist to be wasting his time on this trite material. Brisk, matter of fact performances of Mozart's Concertos for Two and Three Pianos are played on an Epic disc by the Piano Duo Schnabel, Ilse von Alpenheim and the Vienna Symphony under Paumgartner. A modern concerto is Peggy Glanville-Hicks's *Etruscan Concerto*, expertly played on an M.G.M. disc by Carlos

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Bussotti and the M.G.M. Chamber Orchestra under Carlos Surinach. This is an exceedingly clever and somewhat precious work, quite enjoyable in its hither-and-thither flittings. Also on the disc is Vagn Holmboe's serious but dry Concerto for Two Horns, Trumpet and Strings.

Victor's large current list has some good orchestral discs—a smooth performance of Beethoven's *Pastoral* with Munch and the Boston Symphony, and a hectic, fast and exciting one of Beethoven's Seventh by Fritz Reiner and the Chicago Symphony (but traditionalists will not like this performance). The Brahms Fourth, with von Karajan and the Philharmonia (Angel), is a sane, well-balanced job. Even more impressive is the *Eroica*, on an Angel disc with Klemperer and the Philharmonia—the best interpretation on LP, I believe. Another Angel release, the Bruckner Fourth (three sides, with more Bruckner on the fourth), conducted by Lovro von Matacic and the Philharmonia, is powerful but a little raw in its orchestral fabric.

Stravinsky himself conducts a complete recording of his *Baiser de la Fée* with the Cleveland Orchestra (Columbia). This is the ballet based on Tchaikovsky melodies, and Stravinsky leads it without excessive tear-dropping. He is a most convincing exponent of his own music. A brand-new, rich-sounding *New World Symphony*, and a complete *Gaîté Parisienne* (Offenbach-Rosenthal), both with Ormandy and the Philadelphia Orchestra, are also among the Columbia releases. From London come the Bliss *Colour Symphony*, a work with more competence than inspiration, on a disc in which the composer leads the London Symphony; Falla's *El Amor Brujo*, in which an exciting, husky-voiced mezzo named Marina de Gabarain supplies a completely idiomatic interpretation to an equally idiomatic interpretation by Ansermet and the Orchestre de la Suisse Romande; and Mozart's *Divertimentos Nos. 1 and 17*, plus a pair of minuets, directed with competence by Ernst Marzendorfer and the Salzburg Mozarteum. Some brass music, recorded with exceptional fidelity, comes from the Roger Voisin Brass Ensemble on a Unicorn disc. Contemporary music by Dahl, Hindemith, Berezowski and Sanders is played.

Space prevents a complete summary of recent keyboard releases. An important one is Mozart's complete organ music, on three Columbia discs, played by E. Power Biggs on a variety of European organs that Mozart himself played. The Church Sonatas are included. Gulda is continuing his series of Beethoven sonatas on two London discs, playing Nos. 4, 5, 6 and 7, and he has a third disc containing the Schumann *Fantasiestücke* and *Waldscenen* (the former spoiled by an outrageously slow and sentimental performance of *Des Abends*). Vanguard has come out with a charming novelty—a disc devoted entirely to the piano music of Louis Moreau Gottschalk (the American pianist-composer of the 1850's and 1860's), played by Eugene List. Anton Heiller continues his survey of the Bach organ music on an Epic disc, and Fernando Valenti goes gaily along his

Scarlatti trail for Westminster. Westminster also has a large group of Badura-Skoda discs, including an album containing the young man's actual Town Hall recital of March 14th, 1956 (all-Mozart), and in addition has released the first recording of Liszt's complete *Soirées de Vienne* played by Edith Farnadi. More Liszt comes from Victor, with Rubinstein holding forth in the *Funérailles*, *Mephisto Waltz* and additional pieces; and Vladimir Horowitz (Victor) turns his attention to Scriabin, brilliantly playing the Third Sonata and sixteen Preludes.

A current large-scale choral release from Victor contains the Cherubini Requiem, with Toscanini, the Robert Shaw Chorale and the N.B.C. Symphony. This disc was made from the broadcast of February 18th, 1950. The recorded sound is not too good but will serve; and Toscanini's superb performance of the unfamiliar but striking work should achieve wide circulation.

What promised to be a wonderful collection has not come off too well. Westminster has brought out a five-disc album containing all the Fauré songs; but

the singers—Renée Doria, Bertha Monmart, Jacques Dutey, Pierre Mollet and Paul Derenne—are not entirely up to the task, either vocally or stylistically, and the recorded sound leaves much to be desired. Another disappointment is Victor's disc containing a song recital by Björling that was recorded from an actual Carnegie Hall concert. The eminent tenor was not in particularly good voice, he tries to overpower the lieder he sings, and in general disports himself without his usual artistry. No complaint can be registered against Suzanne Danco's artistry, however, in her London disc songs by Debussy, Brahms and Wolf. Whatever the vocal limitations, this is the singing of a sensitive musician.

Military note: Mercury has issued two discs of American army music, in which Frederick Fennell leads members of the Eastman Symphonic Wind Ensemble. If ratatats and taradiddles excite you, these drum rolls, bugle calls, marching tunes and calls to attack, these ruffles, flourishes and alarums without, all very hi-fi indeed, will set your pulse beating madly in duple rhythm.

## LETTER FROM FRANCE

By IGOR B. MASLOWSKI

THE "Angel policy" (records released simultaneously in sealed *de luxe* and thrift standard sleeves), until now applied by E.M.I. to the American market only, has been extended to France where discs of Pathé-Marconi's three main labels, La Voix de son Maître, Columbia and Pathé, can now be acquired at 52s. or 42s. respectively for a 12 inch LP. Time will tell how French discophiles will react to this novelty (the Americans, I was told, prefer overwhelmingly the *de luxe* album). Of the above three labels, Columbia's last release was the most important, comprising, besides numerous British recordings (such as von Karajan's *Così fan tutte*) some first-class French ones as well: Igor Markevitch conducting the Radiodiffusion S.O. in Schubert's "Unfinished" and Mendelssohn's "Italian"; the Lyons organist, Edouard Commette, playing Bach works; Jean Casadesus interpreting "French Piano Music" (Rameau, Couperin, Poulenc, Françaix, Tailleferre, Robert Casadesus) and Gieseking playing Debussy's *Etudes* and *D'un cahier d'Esquisses*.

V.d.s.M. have a very classical reading of the Beethoven "Pastoral" Symphony by the Berlin Philharmonic under Cluytens and, in their "Collectors' Series", three of the late Ginette Neveu's best recordings: Chausson's *Poème* (with the Philharmonia under Dobrowen), Debussy's Sonata No. 3 and Ravel's *Tzigane*. As for Pathé, they have regrouped onto a 12 inch LP thirty-odd short works for flute (J.P. Rampal), bassoon (Maurice Allard), horn (Gilbert Coursier), trumpet (Roger Delmotte), clarinet (Jacques Lancelot), saxophone (Daniel Lafayet) and oboe (Pierre Pierlot) by modern French composers (Ibert, Honegger, Françaix, Challan, Loucheur,

Jolivet, Lesur, Oubradous, Massis, Barraud, Tomasi, etc.). A most interesting record.

Whilst Pathé are experimenting with their double-price policy, Philips are extending and developing their "Favourite Series" which is becoming a real basic disc library sold at "standard" prices (30s. for a 10 inch disc). Latest additions to the list include good performances of the Schubert "Unfinished" Symphony by the Cleveland S.O. under George Szell and of Mendelssohn's Violin Concerto by Grumiaux and the Vienna S.O. under Moralt. In their "Artistic series", Philips have released two superb Prades Festival recordings, Schubert's Quintet, Op. 163 (first version available here) and Brahms's Trio, Op. 8, while in their French production they have a lavishly produced, abridged version of Offenbach's *La Vie Parisienne*.

From Discophiles Français comes a new, pleasant performance of Vivaldi's *Seasons* by the Vivaldi Chamber Orchestra under Bruno Amaducci; Monteverdi's Eighth Book of Madrigals, superbly sung by the Stuttgart Ensemble under Marcel Couraud; Mozart's Oboe (Pierlot) and Bassoon (Paul Hongne) Concertos by the Saar Chamber Orchestra under Ristenpart; also Jacques Castède's interesting *Pasacaille et Fugue*, by the composer at the piano.

Erato are responsible for one of the most

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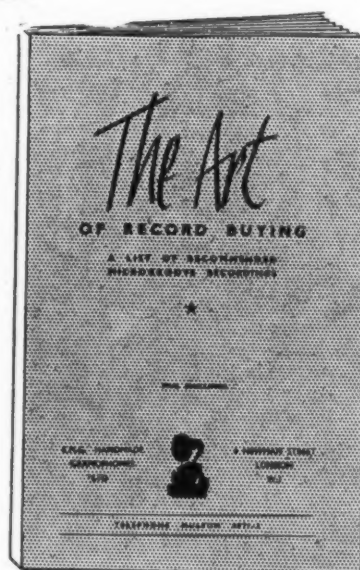
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sensational post-war unearthings: Jean Gilles's (1669-1705) Requiem, last performed at the funeral of King Louis XV, a work of such importance and beauty that its two-centuries-long oblivion is an unexplainable mystery. The performance is by the Philippe Couraud Vocal Ensemble and the J.-M. Leclair Orchestra under Louis Frémaux. Erato have also a curious four-hand pianistic pastiche of Wagner; Fauré's, Messager's and Chabrier's *Souvenirs of Bayreuth and Munich*, in a witty interpretation by Françoise Petit and Anne-Marie Beckenstein.

Véga have issued more contemporary music, including a superb performance by Yvonne Loriod, piano, of Messiaen's complete *Regards sur l'Enfant Jésus* (three 12 inch discs) and a recording of the "Fourth Petit Marigny Concert" under Pierre Boulez (Webern's Symphony, Op. 21 and six Lieder, Nono's *Incontri*, Stockhausen's *Kontra-punkte* and extracts from Boulez's own *Marceau sans maître*, the majority of these works being strictly for atonal music-lovers). In the purely classical field, Véga have a very good complete recording on two LPs

of Bach's Flute and Clavier Sonatas by Wummer and Valenti, Scherchen's amazing performance (released in Britain) of Beethoven's Fourth and Fifth Symphonies and a "Ronsard by the musicians of his era", a disc of polyphonic songs by the Roger Blanchard Vocal Ensemble.

The Second and Third Suites from Prokofiev's *Cinderella* by the U.S.S.R. Radio S.O. under Stassevich and the Bolshoi Theatre S.O. under Rozhdestvenski respectively are featured on a Chant du Monde disc. C.d.M. have also a gripping performance by Oistrakh, Knushevitsky and Oborin of Ravel's Trio, and one of the most beautiful discs of Spanish Songs I have ever heard; Alice Ribeiro, soprano, singing songs of Granados, Obradors, Bacarisse and Turina.

Ducretet offer in well-performed recordings by the Strasbourg Chamber Orchestra under Ernest Bour, Stravinsky's "Dumbarton Oaks" and D major Concertos. I have also learned that this company have recorded, by the composer, all of Messiaen's Organ Music which, when released, will represent eight LPs!

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# ANALYTICAL NOTES AND FIRST REVIEWS

By

PAUL BRYANT  
PHILIP HOPE-WALLACE  
ALEC ROBERTSON

• ROGER FISKE  
• MALCOLM MACDONALD  
• LIONEL SALTER  
• TREVOR HARVEY  
• ANDREW PORTER  
• DENIS STEVENS



## ORCHESTRAL

**BACH.** *Concerto in A minor for Violin and String Orchestra* (a). *Concerto in E major for Violin and String Orchestra* (b). (a) Isaac Stern (violin), (b) David Oistrakh (violin), Philadelphia Orchestra conducted by Eugene Ormandy.

**VIVALDI.** *Concerto in A minor for Two Violins and String Orchestra.* David Oistrakh and Isaac Stern (violins), Philadelphia Orchestra conducted by Eugene Ormandy. Philips ABL3138 (12 in., 38s. 3d.).

*Bach Concerti coupled as above:*  
Heifetz, Los A. P.O., Wallenstein (6/55) (H)BLP1070  
Barchet, Vienna Pro Musica, Davison (3/56) FL8150  
Gruniaux, Guller Chbr. (6/56) NBR0032  
*Bach Concerto in A minor:*  
Stern, Prades Orch., Casals (1/54) 33CX1100  
*Bach Concerto in E major:*  
Goldberg, Philharmonia, Susskind (11/53) PMA1007  
Varga, Berlin P.O., Lehmann (5/56) APM14050

David Oistrakh met Isaac Stern, born in Russia though raised in America, in Brussels in 1951, when Oistrakh was a judge at the Queen Elizabeth prize competition. During Oistrakh's tour of America last year the two men met again; and collaborated in making this recording of the Vivaldi A minor Double Concerto. It is No. 8 of Op. 3, *L'Estro Armonico* (Pincherle No. 2)—or rather the first two movements are; the finale sounds familiar, but is not the movement whose *incipit* is given by Pincherle, and which is played by the Stuttgart group in their complete recording of *L'Estro Armonico*.

The sleeve describes the score used as "an arrangement for concert use"; this is evidently the arrangement by one Franko, mentioned in WERM, who concocted a new third movement for the A minor Double Concerto from Bach's "Vivaldi" Concerto No. 8 (which is not by Vivaldi). The new finale is showier and more effective than the original one, but less finely inventive than the original.

The great band of people who do not care whether Bach's trills begin on the upper note or not, and never care whether they hear a harpsichord continuo—and they must be the great majority, despite the enlightenment that Münchinger's ensemble, the D.G.G. Archive series, the B.B.C. Third Programme, and several chamber orchestras have brought—these people will find them-

selves well served by the new disc. And others, of course, will enjoy it as well. The playing of both soloists, in Vivaldi as in Bach, is strong, true and rhythmical; phrases are firmly moulded. And the orchestral contribution does not sound overweighted. It is only when we compare the Vivaldi work with the version by the Stuttgart players under Rolf Reinhardt (on Vox DL173-3) that it becomes apparent how much there is to be said, aesthetically, for scholarship. Reinhardt's slower tempi make a more thoughtful performance possible, and the *Larghetto* in particular takes on a beauty missing from the Philadelphia recording. A.P.

**BEETHOVEN.** *Concerto No. 4 in G major, Op. 58.* Edwin Fischer (piano), Philharmonia Orchestra. H.M.V. BLP1067 (10 in., 29s. 6d.).

Backhaus, V.P.O., Kruss (1/52) LXT2629  
Gieseking, Philharmonia, Karajan (4/53) 33C1007  
Badura-Skoda, V. Op., Scherchen (2/54) WLP5143  
Solomon, Philharmonia, Cluytens (2/54) (H)BLP1036  
Curzon, V.P.O., Knappertsbusch (10/54) LXT2948  
De Groot, V.S.O., Otterloo (8/55) ABR4038  
Kempff, Berlin P.O., Kempen (9/55) DG10072  
Arrau, Philharmonia, Galliera (3/56) 33CX1333

With so many of the world's greatest pianists competing in recordings of this Concerto, this new performance unfortunately cannot be recommended. At 70, Fischer's right hand seems to have lost much of its power and technique, for a good deal of the finger-work is not clear enough and often ineffective—in such things as the semiquaver triplet passages in the first movement. One could, indeed, list point after point, sometimes even in slow passages, which are not effectively calculated. In the slow movement, to mention only two such places, one does not hear the first piano A in bar 28, while in bar 40 the important top C is hardly audible. There are a great many such unsatisfactory places all through the whole performance and so the welcome things, the admirable way Fischer has kept the bassoon forward in the first movement, for instance (he is presumably conducting as well), are far outweighed. The cadenzas, by the way, are not Beethoven's own fine ones but, I am told, are the pianist's own in the first movement and one by d'Albert in the finale.

H.M.V., for once, also cannot be congratulated. In the fourth bar of the Rondo some violinist plays a bad E. An accident can happen anywhere but it ought not to be left on a record. The piano tone is woolly and when I made efforts to brighten it I found I then lost the quality of the orchestral sound.

So the situation remains as it was. Arrau for a leisurely but masterly performance, with some wonderful piano playing. Solomon certainly to be considered and also De Groot for a good all-round per-

formance and recording. New Decca pressings of their fine Backhaus performances also sound well. T.H.

**BEETHOVEN.** *Concerto for Piano and Orchestra No. 5 in E flat, Op. 73.* Six Variations on the Turkish March for Piano. Friedrich Wührer (piano), Pro Musica Symphony, Vienna, conducted by Heinrich Hollreiser. Vox PL9490 (12 in., 39s. 7½d.).

*Concerto No. 5:*  
Curzon, L.P.O., Szell (9/50) LXT2506  
Gieseking, Philharmonia, Karajan (10/52) 33CX1010  
Fischer, Philharmonia, Furtwaengler (6/53) (H)ALP1051  
Serkin, Philadelphia, Ormandy (10/53) 33CX1070  
Backhaus, V.P.O., Krauss (1/54) LXT2839  
Badura-Skoda, V. Op., Scherchen (7/54) WLP5114  
de Groot, Hague P.O., Otterloo (6/55) ABL3032  
Kempff, Berlin P.O., Kempen (7/55) DGM18131  
Solomon, Philharmonia, Menges (1/56) (H)ALP1300  
Horowitz, R.C.A., Reiner (9/56) (H)ALP1280  
C.s.d.sus, N.Y. Phil. S.O., Mitropoulos (9/56) ABL3142

A rich and warm quality of recording is in evidence throughout this new version of the *Emperor*; it helps substantially towards achieving a most majestic result. For the Vienna Pro Musica orchestra play firmly and alertly, and Wührer is on the top of his form: commanding power and delicacy alike flow in profusion, always entirely convincingly. The first movement has the sweep that surely Beethoven intended, and the second, too, is allowed no flagging of impulse. And Wührer is in complete and effective control of the finale, a movement always so difficult to present rhythmically and effectively (the layout of the solo piano part is surely unhandy even for Beethoven, not in this direction by any means the most considerate of composers). But in spite of its sweep this third movement does have one mild technical unhappiness: a rather frequent change of tapes, not always with quite identical sound-characteristics, and occasionally with minute discrepancies of pitch.

Verbal description inevitably must seem to exaggerate the extent of this last defect, which is in fact on a very small scale. I do believe that many listeners will find this *Emperor* the most satisfying of all; and if I continue in a personal preference for the H.M.V. version by Solomon and the Philharmonia it is not because of any technical fuss of this description but because I think that on that disc an at least equally good performance is presented with a marginally greater clarity of sound, a clarity in no way detracting from the imposing quality of the music as a whole.

The new Vox disc, however, adds an encore to the concerto: Beethoven's Op. 76 Variations, for solo piano. The theme of the variations is the "Turkish March" the composer used again two years later in the



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## NOVEMBER RELEASES

Available 1st November



### LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN

Symphony No. 6, F major, Opus 68 (Pastoral)

The Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra · Conductor: Eugen Jochum

Violin Sonata, G major, Opus 30, No. 3

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Violin Sonata, D minor, Opus 108

Wolfgang Schneiderhan, Violin · Wilhelm Kempff · Friedrich Wührer, Piano

### HECTOR BERLIOZ

Harold in Italy, Opus 16

The Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra · Heinz Kirchner, Viola · Conductor: Igor Markevitch

### WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART

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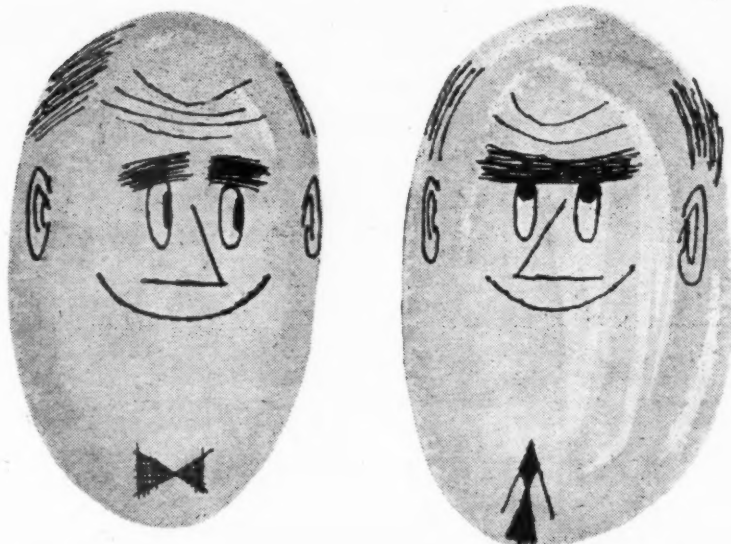
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# Keith Prowse

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*Ruins of Athens* music; and though the theme is itself supposed to be Russian, Beethoven certainly presents it in what at any rate we suppose to be a Turkish style. This is extended to some of the variations, and, played as well as they are here by Wührer, they make a most acceptable short set. M.M.

**BEETHOVEN. Symphony No. 1 in C major, Op. 21. Symphony No. 8 in F major, Op. 93. L'Orchestre de la Suisse Romande conducted by Ernest Ansermet. Decca LXT5232 (12 in., 39s. 7½d.).**

*Coupled as above:*

V.P.O., Schuricht (1), Bo:hm (8) (10/53) LXT2824  
Berlin P.O., Fricsay (1/56) DGM18100

*Symphony No. 1:*

V.P.O., Schuricht (9/52) LX3084  
N.B.C. S.O., Toscanini (4/53) (H)ALP1040  
V. Op., Scherchen (10/53) WLP6208  
Belg. Rad. S.O., Andre (4/54) LGM6520  
Philharmonia, Karajan (10/54) 33CX1136  
Vienna P.M., Perlea (12/55) PL9130  
V.P.O., Furtwaengler (4/56) (H)ALP1324

*Symphony No. 8:*

Conservatoire, Munch (11/51) LX3053  
R.P.O., Beecham (6/53) 33CX1039  
N.B.C. S.O., Toscanini (3/54) (H)ALP1108  
Los A. P.O., Wallenstein (1/55) ANTL1058  
Berlin P.O., Kempen (4/55) ABL3030  
Pittsburgh S.O., Steinberg (7/55) CTL7083  
L.P.S.O., Scherchen (8/55) WLP5302  
V.P.M., Perlea (9/56) PL8740  
Philharmonia, Karajan (11/56) 33CX1302

The first copy I had of this record was defective in the recording of the last movement of the Eighth, as was also a copy which the B.B.C. happened to send me. A great deal of wavering of pitch was the trouble and I noticed that a writer in a contemporary also complained of the same thing. Decca then supplied a copy that was perfectly all right and the assurance that copies in the shops were also in good condition. I report this, then, only because accidents can happen (it must be an accident to send a reviewer, of all people, a bad copy) and so intending purchasers should test this movement before they buy their copy.

Ansermet in Beethoven is something of a surprise and Decca have hitherto recorded him only in the things he is known to do supremely well. These two symphonies are not the supreme test of a Beethoven conductor, of course, but his habit of slightly slowing *cantabile* tunes in the Eighth, especially in the finale, suggests that he might not be an ideal choice for the *Eroica*, say: the rhythm and "spin" are slightly lost. But the First Symphony comes off admirably, especially as he gets extremely neat playing and a very good recording. And, with that one slight reservation, so does the Eighth. For a pairing of these symphonies this is a recommended disc. And if you want the really outstanding performance of either, the trouble is that they are tied up with three sides of the Ninth Symphony—Toscanini's First and Karajan's Eighth (reviewed in this issue). Though for the Eighth there are two more to hear—Beecham's and Scherchen's. With these, however, this most recent issue at least comes into competition. T.H.

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**BEETHOVEN. Symphony No. 5 in C major, Op. 67. Philharmonia Orchestra conducted by Otto Klemperer. Columbia 33C1051 (10 in., 29s. 6½d.).**

Paris Cons. Schuricht (9/50) LXT2513  
V.P.O., Karajan (10/52) 33CX1004  
V.S.O., Klemperer (5/53) PL7070  
N.Y.S.O., Walter (11/53) 33CX1077  
Concertgebouw, Kleiber (1/54) LXT2551  
Hamburg P.O., Keilberth (3/54) LGX66005  
N.B.C. S.O., Toscanini (3/54) (H)ALP1108  
V.P.O., Furtwaengler (2/55) (H)ALP1105  
Pittsburgh S.O., Steinberg (7/55) CTL7083  
Philharmonia, Karajan (11/55) 33CX1206  
Berlin P.O., Boehm (11/55) DGM18097  
Berlin P.O., Jochum (1/56) NBR0030  
L.P.S.O., Scherchen (4/56) WLP20003

The third arrival in Otto Klemperer's series of Beethoven symphonies with the Philharmonia is well up to the standards of its fellows (Nos. 3 and 7): which is to say that in a field where competition is probably stiffer than anywhere else in the recorded repertory, these versions are the most evident first choice for someone who wants just one version of each symphony.

Up to now, my recommendation for Beethoven Five has been the earlier Klemperer disc, with the Vienna Symphony (Vox PL7070). In essentials his new performance is the same as the old one, and super-

#### Mr. E. R. Lewis

On Monday, October 1st, a dinner was given at the Savoy Hotel, London, by Mr. Eric Gallo to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the entry of Mr. E. R. Lewis into the Gramophone Record Industry. Some 450 guests who were present heard many well-known people extol the virtues and achievements of the honoured guest and his wife, but to list even a few of them would almost fill an issue of this magazine.

Readers may, at a later date, be able to read of the work of this remarkable man if his promised book is published, but until that day we feel sure all our readers would like to join us in expressing our thanks to Mr. E. R. Lewis and the Decca Record Company for their services to the Record Industry.

sedes it by virtue of finer orchestral playing, of better recording, and of being a 10-inch, and therefore less expensive, disc.

The fineness of his interpretation reveals itself in the opening bars, in the distinction of length between the pause on the minim, and the pause on the two minims tied. Neither Karajan nor Kleiber (who head the competition in this particular work) judges it quite so impressively.

The Coda of the Andante, with its changes of speed, is particularly searching. In the Scherzo we notice the main change from the earlier performance; the *poco ritenuto*s are not pulled up quite so much, and the general tempo is perhaps just a shade faster. In this movement there occurs the only possible slip in the execution. The horn pronouncement of the "motto" (bar 19) swings in at a tempo which is then notched back to a slightly more deliberate one when the strings enter at bar 27.

In the Finale, Klemperer (in both Vox and Columbia versions) makes the repeat of

the first section, which neither Karajan nor Kleiber does. This definitely adds something to the shape of the movement, and once one is accustomed to it, its absence can give a lop-sided impression to the movement—to the whole symphony indeed, since the last two movements are appreciated in a single span. This weighty, penetrating performance comes to a glorious close in which the full force of the Philharmonia is handled by the recording engineers without a trace of distortion. A.P.

**BEETHOVEN. Symphony No. 6 in F major, "Pastoral". Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Eugen Jochum. D.G.G. DGM18202 (12 in., 39s. 7½d.).**

Pittsburgh S.O., Steinberg (5/53) CTL7023  
V.S.O., Klemperer (8/53) PL6900  
R.P.O., Beecham (9/53) 33CX1062  
V.P.O., Furtwaengler (12/53) (H)ALP1041  
V. Op., Scherchen (1/54) WLP1008  
Concertgebouw, Kleiber (2/54) LXT2872  
Philharmonia, Karajan (4/54) 33CX1124  
N.B.C., Toscanini (5/54) (H)ALP1129  
V.S.O., Otterloo (6/55) ABL3043  
N.B.C. S.O., Stokowski (12/55) (H)ALP1208

Jochum's must rank among the most sensitive performances of the *Pastoral* ever given. Every possible refinement is brought to bear on the details of the playing; constantly pleasure is being given by a turn of phrase in the woodwind, a real *pianissimo* in the strings, or an unexpected and effective moulding of the dynamics of the whole.

But in the course of the refining process some of the impulse of the original is lost. Particularly is this so in the first movement. Considered in isolation Jochum's quite unusually slow tempo might possibly be successfully defended, though it is by no means certain; but as the first movement of a symphony proceeding to a lengthy *Andante* this slow motion will not work. For the *Andante* loses much of its contrast; performed in itself most beautifully, it yet lacks effect from the context, and the impulse that is certainly now brought to bear on the music succeeds only in minimising the moderate degree of contrast that there is, or should be, between these first two movements.

With the turn of the record and the *Peasants' Merry-making* restraint is still in evidence, though in a less degree; and the playing of the solo oboe and horn is unalloyed delight. Jochum makes, too, the highly desirable repeat. Then at last he does throw aside restraint, though not care for detail; the performance of the last two movements is completely effective, with soft timpani adding much more than their wont to the storm, and solo horn both muted and audible—a most rare occurrence—in the final bars of the *Thanksgiving*.

Throughout the record is technically faultless, though it is possible that on some reproducers it may seem to lack a marginal degree of brilliance. And a silent surface allows full effect to the many very quiet passages. But even so I believe a purchaser should be very sure he shares Jochum's view of, particularly, the first movement before he selects this version for exclusive representation of the *Pastoral* in his library. Lacking that certainty, he would perhaps with greater safety make for Kleiber's

Decca or Karajan's Columbia, choosing between them—if in any doubt after reading earlier reviews—by reference to his particular reproducer's response to the best of Decca's and of Columbia's recording.

M.M.

**BEETHOVEN. Symphony No. 9 in D minor, Op. 125, "Choral".** **Symphony No. 8 in F major, Op. 93.** Elisabeth Schwarzkopf (soprano), Marga Höffgen (contralto), Ernst Häfliger (tenor), Otto Edelmann (bass), Chorus of the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde, Vienna, Philharmonia Orchestra conducted by Herbert von Karajan. Columbia 33CX1391-2 (two 12 in., 79s. 3d.).

*Symphony No. 9:*  
V.P.O., Kleiber (10/52) LXT2725-6  
N.B.C.S.O., Toscanini (4/58) (H)ALP1039-40  
Vienna Op., Scherchen (10/53) WLP6908-1/2  
Hague P.O., Otterloo (4/55) ABL3080-1  
Bayreuth Festival, Furtwängler (11/55) (H)ALP1286-7

*Symphony No. 8:*  
See page 199

With Columbia's recording and the artists listed above it is evident that the singing, playing and recorded sound will at the very least be good. And so they are, especially the playing. The chorus is not recorded so as to give its words telling quality but certainly sounds, as it should, as if the voices of all the world (or of all Vienna at least) are joining in this hymn to happiness. The soloists do fairly well, though comparison with the Furtwängler performance, in which soprano and bass are the same, shows that his 1951 Bayreuth quartet were better. Elisabeth Schwarzkopf in that performance was radiantly on top of her cruelly difficult music: in this new recording she is very good but not so entirely happy. Otto Edelmann again gives his inspiring account of the opening bars but the tenor, Häfliger, is not nearly so satisfying as was Hans Hopf. There is too much vibrato in the voice and his top B flat has nothing like the virility of Hopf's. The contralto, Maria Höffgen, does her less exacting part very well.

But in the end, of course, any performance of the Ninth is a supreme test of its conductor and Karajan gives a fine account of it. It has not the enormous drive of Toscanini's nor quite the superb rhythm of his Scherzo. On the other hand it has more breadth, in the first movement especially. It has not the brooding depth of Furtwängler's great performance, but many may think that too drawn out—and too expensive, with its four sides! In other words, it is a fine performance that strikes a mean between those two. The actual recording is much better, of course, than Toscanini had but the Furtwängler competes in quality (even though it was made two years before Toscanini's).

One hopes that both these two older versions, whatever their shortcomings, will always be available. Meanwhile this latest Ninth is much recommended. In addition Karajan gives us a really outstanding performance of the Eighth, full of vitality and most enjoyable in every way. T.H.

**BERLIOZ. Harold in Italy, Op. 16.** Heinz Kirchner (viola), Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Igor Markevitch. D.G.G. DGM 18299 (12 in., 39s. 7½d.).

Primrose, R.P.O., Beecham (12/52) 38CX1019  
Riddle, L.P.S.O., Scherchen (6/55) NLP911

The thing that puzzles me about this otherwise admirable production is why a very large cut has been made in the last movement. The fact that most of the music in the missing bit has been heard before does not seem to justify it. The performance jumps from one spot to an identical one later on. Have the tape editors slipped up, one wonders?

At any rate, there it is and a great pity too, for the performance itself is a most beautiful one. The serious rival is the Primrose-Beecham one on Columbia. The soloists are very different, Primrose more virile, Kirchner more gently poetic. But Kirchner is a lovely player, with a warm tone and great artistry in his phrasing.

Markevitch brings as much care to the orchestral work as Beecham does and one need hardly remark that the Berlin Philharmonic's playing is lovely to hear. The second movement here is the quickest thing in Pilgrims' Marches yet but if it is faster than Berlioz indicates, it is only by the very slightest bit. It is marked *allegretto* and this is a real *allegretto*. Even Beecham makes them pace a little solemnly, whereas I don't know why they shouldn't be as cheerful as they are here. When we get to those acres of viola solo *arpeggi* Kirchner's almost *sotto voce* way of playing gives the only tolerable result and I have never survived these bars with more pleasure.

The Primrose-Beecham record is not, however, to be lightly put aside. This new D.G.G. recording is better but the Columbia one still sounds very well. Newcomers, though, should try both. I myself would go straight for the latest arrival, for its poetic solo playing, its imaginative conducting and its new recording—till I remembered that cut and then I should hesitate. It removes no less than 25 pages of the miniature score. T.H.

**BORODIN. Symphony No. 1 in E flat major.**

**RIMSKY-KORSAKOV. Capriccio Espagnol, Op. 34.** Philharmonia Orchestra conducted by Alceo Galliera. Columbia 33CX1356 (12 in., 39s. 7½d.).

*Capriccio Espagnol:*  
Suisse, Ansermet (3/53) LXT2760  
Fr. Nat. Radio, Desormiere (11/53) CTL7020  
Philharmonia, Schuchter (9/54) PMC1008  
L.S.O., Scherchen (10/54) NLP914  
Halle, Barbirolli (11/54) (H)BLP1068

Here is an unexpected arrival, the missing First Symphony of Borodin! The Second is, of course, constantly played: the unfinished Third exists in more than one recording. But I wonder how many readers have ever heard this first one. You can soon see why it has never become as popular as its successor but it has enough good things in it to make one wonder why orchestras do not produce it occasionally at popular concerts.

The jaunty and cheerful first movement is based on material that is not very arresting

but it has some attractive moments and, for a surprise, a slow and very tender ending. There is a good deal of originality but too much repetition of one or two short phrases. The *Scherzo* is excellent, the slow movement pleasant, the finale rather undistinguished. Yet it is all certainly worth having and Columbia have done us a service in recording it and making our knowledge of Borodin's symphonic work complete.

They could, however, have taken more trouble over the recording which is all right as long as the music is quiet but acquires a vulgar sound whenever it becomes loud. This is the more unwanted, of course, in the *Capriccio Espagnol*, available in so many other versions. The brass tone is not good, there is little vivid clarity and little real brilliance.

And Galliera's performance of this well-worn piece is not distinguished, though perhaps it is unfair to comment when one's ear dislikes the actual sound so much. Certainly he seems to have taken far more trouble over the unknown Borodin and has here aroused the orchestra's interest. For the *Capriccio* I would choose Barbirolli. But most will be interested in this record, I imagine, for the Borodin novelty. T.H.

**BRUCH. Concerto for Violin and Orchestra No. 1 in G minor, Op. 26.**

**SIBELIUS. Concerto for Violin and Orchestra in D minor, Op. 47.** Ivry Gitlis (violin), Pro Musica Symphony, Vienna, conducted by Jascha Horenstein. Vox PL9660 (12 in., 39s. 7½d.).

*Bruch Violin Concerto:*  
Campoli, N.S.O., Kisch (8/51) LXT2506 or (12/54) LXT2904  
Varga, Philharmonia, Susskind (3/54) 38SX1017

Heifetz, L.S.O., Sargent (4/54) (H)ALP1124  
Milstein, Pittsburgh S.O., Steinberg (12/54) CTL7050

Francescatti, N.Y. S.O., Mitropoulos (12/54) ABR4011  
D. Oistrakh, L.S.O., Maticic (9/55) 38CX1298  
Elman, L.P.O., Boulton (10/56) LXT5222

*Sibelius Violin Concerto:*  
Wicks, Stockholm R.O., Ehrling (2/53) CTL7026

Stern, R.P.O., Beecham (2/53) 38CX1298  
Jan Dams, L.P.O., Behnm (10/53) LXT2813  
D. Oistrakh, Stockholm Fest., Ehrling (3/55) 39CX1096

Ivry Gitlis is a technical master, and he brings to both the Bruch and Sibelius concertos an address that stands them in very good stead. But he is comparatively reluctant to woo the music, when this approach seems called for; or it may be that a rather fast and narrow vibrato makes him seem so. To the Bruch, of course, this lack of romantic ardour is the more damaging. The Sibelius relaxes less often; and indeed Gitlis's attack on it is pursued with an intensity and ferocity that are substantially rewarding in their own right.

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de Paris (Leibowitz)

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B Minor (Unfinished)  
Bamberg Symphony Orchestra  
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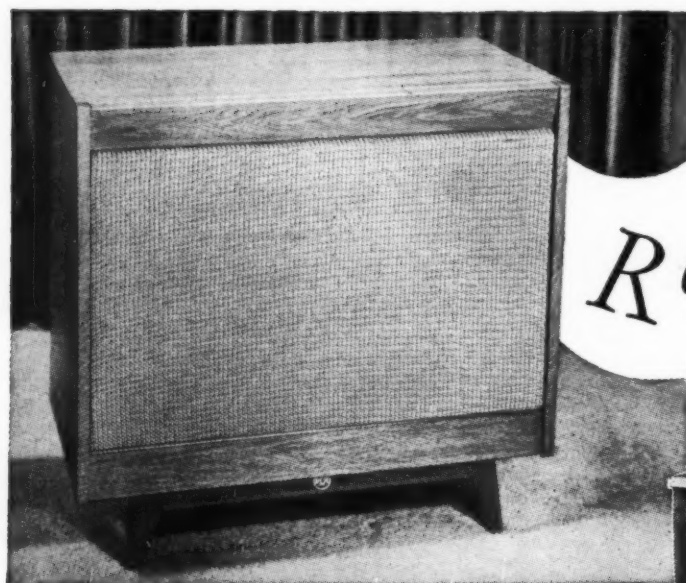
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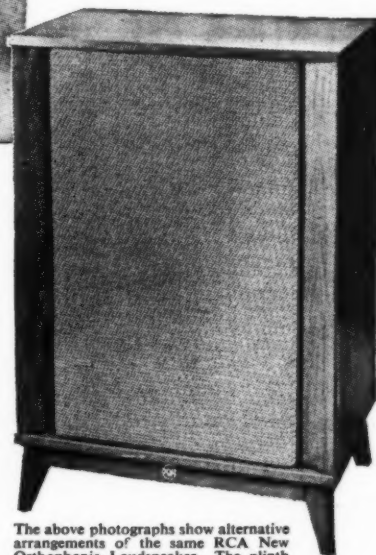


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but not without an occasional roughness: near the beginning of the slow movement of the Sibelius an unexpected bassoon entry an octave too high upsets things momentarily. But it is not typical, nor is a sag in pitch at the end of the slow movement of the Bruch; for in general the recording is good, though unwilling to unleash the orchestral climaxes without inhibition or sense of strain.

In the case of the Bruch concerto, no version, new or old, I think quite matches the outstanding excellence of Oistrakh's Columbia: a disc offering also a first-class version of the Prokofiev D major Concerto. Also perhaps to be considered on account of alternative couplings are Milstein's Capitol, with the Mendelssohn, and Francescatti's ten-inch Philips, which splits the Bruch (at a suitable moment), and then goes on to include an electrifying performance of Wieniawski's *Souvenir de Moscou*.

And, of course, perhaps the new disc; for the coupled Sibelius concerto has the great merit of being complete on one side of the record. None of the earlier versions manages this, and some of them are expansive enough to take two twelve-inch sides over the work. Most formidable of them, however, I think, is again Oistrakh's Columbia: a ten-inch version whose extreme clarity, both of performance and recording, must continue to recommend it. A new one-sided version of the Sibelius, an H.M.V. of Menuhin with Boult and the L.P.O., is considered this month under the heading (such are the odd stratagems to which the LP age has reduced us) of Paganini on p. 203. M.M.

**HOLST. St. Paul's Suite. A Somerset Rhapsody, Op. 21. Marching Song No. 2 of "Two Songs without Words", Op. 22. Philharmonia Orchestra conducted by George Weldon.** Columbia 33S1100 (10 in., 26s. 5d.).

*St. Paul's Suite:*  
Boyd Neel Orch.

(2/51) LX3025

Decca's 1951 *St. Paul's Suite* still sounds remarkably well but this new recording easily surpasses it, particularly in the quiet middle movements, where the background is so much cleaner. The performances are considerably different, George Weldon having apparently used a large body of strings, whereas Boyd Neel's are naturally light-weight. They are none the worse for that but the music stands the larger body well and Weldon gets some lovely playing from the Philharmonia and the sound is really fine. I much prefer his speed for the last piece of the Suite, the *Dargason*, much more like the dance than Boyd Neel's over-quick tempo. The enchanting little *Ostinato* is delightfully done and the slow parts of the *Intermezzo* are most beautiful. And what a good string suite this is!

To describe the little-known *Somerset Rhapsody* as a typical English folksong piece of the earlier part of the century would be accurate, yet I would not like to suggest any disparagement, for it is well contrived and most enjoyable to listen to—unless you dislike this sort of thing. Since it ends softly (and rather abruptly) the *Marching*

*Song*, also with a strong folksong background, forms an apt follow-on.

Very good performances and recordings again, and the whole thing is fresh and attractive music that can be much recommended. T.H.

**KODALY. Dances of Galanta. Dances of Marosszek. R.I.A.S. Symphony Orchestra, Berlin, conducted by Ferenc Fricsay.** D.G.G. DG17060 (10 in., 29s. 6½d.).

*Coupled as above:*

|                             |                   |
|-----------------------------|-------------------|
| V.S.O., Moralt              | (1/55) NBR6009    |
| <i>Dances of Galanta:</i>   |                   |
| L.P.O., Solti               | (3/53) LXT2771    |
| L.P.O., Cameron             | (1/56) (H)DLP1100 |
| <i>Dances of Marosszek:</i> |                   |
| L.S.O., Previtali           | (2/55) (H)DLP1084 |

Fricsay and Moralt see eye to eye about the tempo of these enjoyable Dances. To be honest, it was only by the recording quality, not by the performance, that I could tell which was which when tested. The Philips recording is brighter and more forward; the D.G.G. has a slight suggestion of plush lining, though it is a good disc. And the Philips has the further advantage of being about four shillings cheaper. A.P.

**LALO. Symphonie Espagnole, Op. 21. CHAUSSON. Poème, Op. 25. RAVEL. Tzigane. Arthur Grumiaux (violin), Lamoureux Orchestra, Paris, conducted by Jean Fournet.** Philips ABL3126 (12 in., 38s. 3d.).

*Symphonie Espagnole:*  
Campoli, L.P.O., Beinum (7/53) LXT2801  
Heifetz, R.C.A. S.O., Steinberg (1/53) (H)BLP1029  
*Poème:*  
Oistrakh, Philharmonia, Martinon (5/55) 33CX1246  
Milstein, St. Louis S.O., Golschmann (10/55) CTL7095

The Lalo *Symphonie Espagnole* receives in general terms a good performance, but one without the final degree of charm, a quality so essential to any fully effective presentation of the agreeable work. Similarly, the recording is good, but with a slight tendency to dryness; some of the roughness apparent in the *tutti* is, I think, due primarily to the spread of brass tone from which the Lamoureux players suffer no less than other Parisian orchestras.

But this version of the *Symphonie* has nevertheless what may be thought a substantial virtue in that it omits the *Intermezzo*, a movement with which most listeners feel able to dispense without any very great sense of loss, and this omission enables the work to be presented complete (complete, that is, as to the remaining four movements) on one record side.

And the backing thus made available is certainly rewarding, for Grumiaux gives the Chausson *Poème* a superlative performance, sustaining its unruffled mood of serenity with complete conviction; a conviction shared, too, by the orchestra. The Ravel *Tzigane* is a well-chosen and happy foil to the Chausson, but here Grumiaux gives a performance of calculated excellence rather than gipsy abandon; and while calculated excellence, goodness knows, is no hardship to the listener, this particular piece is one in which he may reasonably expect the sparks to fly without restraint. (They do, in fact, in the Devy Erlih recital reviewed elsewhere in this issue.)

The Lalo *Symphonie Espagnole* calls for some comparative consideration. Only one alternative to the new disc exists for the listener preferring the four-movement version, complete on one side: Milstein's Capitol. This also lacks the final degree of charm, and is also somewhat drily, though certainly decently recorded; but the St. Louis orchestra does score a point or two off the Lamoureux here and there. The backing of this Capitol is the Prokofiev D major Concerto. The two five-movement versions of the Lalo both extend over the whole of two twelve-inch sides; but in exchange for this Campoli and Oistrakh do offer in them more entirely winning readings of the solo part. Perhaps Campoli in particular; but Decca gave him a less consistently excellent recording than Columbia gave Oistrakh. M.M.

**MENDELSSOHN. Overtures: Ruy Blas. The Hebrides.**

**SCHUBERT. Overture—Rosamunde. WEBER. Overtures: Oberon; Der Freischütz; Euryanthe. Bamberg Symphony conducted by Jonel Perlea.** Vox PL9590 (12 in., 39s. 7½d.).

These well-known overtures need better conducting than they mostly get here. The exceptions are the two Mendelssohn ones, especially the *Hebrides*, where Perlea takes an unhurried tempo that I have long wanted to hear on a recorded performance. *Ruy Blas* comes off well, too.

But the three Webers show little real imagination in their romantic episodes and their *allegro* sections lack spirit. In addition, *Oberon* has one or two moments of plain bad playing. After a very ordinary version of the magical opening, the second woodwind flutter starts in bad ensemble with the horn: the first trumpet's last notes in that first march-like phrase are abominably played. All of which suggests that the opening of this overture should have been remade. The *allegro* that follows is not truly *fuoco* and there is the almost usual enormous slowing down for the clarinet tune, in which the soloist plays something more like a semiquaver than a quaver in his fourth bar. I am not trying to be tiresome: this sort of thing does matter.

Neither of the other two Weber overtures is very exciting and Perlea frequently shows a tendency to start hurrying after he has started an *allegro*, with bad effect on the rhythm, of course. This weakness is at its worst in the *Rosamunde* Overture. T.H.

## E.M.I. November Supplement

The LPs and EPs which form the November Supplements of the "H.M.V.", Columbia, Parlophone, M.G.M. and Capitol trade-marks will not be on sale until Friday, November 9th. It has not been possible to include reviews in this issue of the following classical LPs which form part of the above Supplements: "H.M.V.": Beethoven—Songs, Volumes 1 and 2 (Fischer-Dieskau); Verdi—Requiem Mass (Toscanini); Rachmaninov—Piano Concerto No. 1 and Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini (Rachmaninov). Parlophone: Mozart—Organ Pieces (Elsasser).



**MENDELSSOHN. Symphony No. 4 in A major, Op. 90, "Italian".**

**SCHUBERT. Symphony No. 8 in B minor, "Unfinished". Orchestre National de la Radiodiffusion Française** conducted by **Igor Markevitch**. Columbia 33CX1394 (12 in., 39s. 74d.).

*Coupled as above:*  
**Philharmonia, Cantelli** (3/56) (H)ALP1325  
*Symphony No. 4:*  
 R.P.O., Beecham (3/53) 33C1008  
 V.S.O., Klemperer (5/53) PL7860  
 L.S.O., Krips (4/54) LXT2887  
 N.B.C.S.O., Toscanini (5/56) H)ALP 1267  
 Concertgebouw, Beinum (9/56) SBR6202  
*Symphony No. 8:*  
 L.S.O., Krips (11/50) LX3012  
 N.B.C.S.O., Toscanini (5/56) (H)ALP1327  
 Pittsburgh S.O., Steinberg (12/54) CCL7511  
 R.P.O., Beecham (6/53) 33CX1039  
 Philadelphia S.O., Walter (12/53) 33CX1082  
 N.B.C.S.O., Toscanini (12/54) (H)BLP1038  
 Philharmonia, Schwartz (12/54) (H)CLP1022  
 Vienna P.O., Boehm (4/55) LXT2998  
 Concertgebouw, Jochum (4/55) ABR4021  
 Berlin P.O., Lehmann (7/55) DG10051  
 Bamberg S.O., Keilberth (11/55) LGX6042

Markevitch's conducting on his D.G.G. records has been impressing me more and more but on this disc of popular symphonies he is a great disappointment. Most of the *Italian* is very hurried and graceless, with unrefined playing. When he suddenly gets an interpretative idea it seems not always to be a good one—the broad delivery of the second movement's opening phrase followed by a much faster speed for the stepping quavers, for instance, which in view of the combination of both ideas at the end of the movement would seem not to have been Mendelssohn's intention and is certainly odd in effect.

But the worst thing about this record is its recording, so blurred that the quick and loud parts of the *Italian* are impossible to sort out—most unlike Columbia. Here the *Unfinished* fares better since neither of its movements is fast but the louder passages cannot be said to have an attractive quality.

Cantelli gives easily the best *Italian*, though I like his *Unfinished* less. As a coupling, however, it easily beats this new one. For the *Unfinished* alone I still enjoy Beecham the most and it has a fine Beethoven Eighth on its reverse. T.H.

**MOZART. Concerto No. 3 in G major, K.416. Leonid Kogan** (violin), **Philharmonia Orchestra** conducted by **Otto Ackermann**.

**PROKOFIEV. Concerto No. 2 in G minor, Op. 63. Leonid Kogan** (violin), **London Symphony Orchestra** conducted by **Basil Cameron**. Columbia 33CX1395 (12 in., 39s. 74d.).

*Concerto No. 3:*  
 Goldberg, Philharmonia, Susskind (3/53) PMA1003  
 Stern, Chamber Orch., Stern (11/53) 33CX1071  
 Fournier, V. Op., Horvath (10/54) WLP5187  
 Grumiaux, V.S.O., Moralt (4/55) ABL3040  
 Ferras, S.C.O., Münchinger (7/55) LXT5044

Prokofiev's Second Violin Concerto of 1935, dating from the same period as *Romeo and Juliet*, is a beautifully composed, lyrical work—light music, if you like, but poetic, elegant and graceful. Heifetz recorded it long ago with the Boston Orchestra; it is surprising that it should have had to wait so long for LP, when the First (and more substantial) Concerto should already have

achieved three recordings. Leonid Kogan gives an imperturbably serene and poised account of the solo part, while the L.S.O. supplies unobtrusive, discreet support. The American versions, Heifetz with the Boston (available on LP) and Francescatti with the New York Philharmonic, are quite possibly more brilliant—but they could hardly be more stylish. Recommended to all who enjoy a cultivated, unemphatic composition, written and performed well within strength.

The evident coupling would have been Prokofiev's First Concerto (which Milstein backs with Lalo, and Oistrakh with Bruch). Kogan plays the Mozart G major with the same calm eloquence, and gives an enjoyable performance; but neither of the outer movements really settles down comfortably into a natural and regular tempo. In bar 22 of the Adagio the plucked strings make a strange, thudding sound, which sounds less like a musical note than as if some workman were hammering (in time with the music) in an adjacent studio. Otherwise the recording is comfortable and true. But how enjoyable—and how sensible—it would be if Columbia were to press the Prokofiev No. 2 backed by their Oistrakh recording of No. 1.

All recordings of the Mozart concerto, by the way, "crush" the grace-notes of the finale. Are soloists, and conductors, indissolubly wedded to the old Gesamtausgabe parts, so that they never look at more modern, scholarly editions? A.P.

**MOZART. Symphony No. 26 in E flat major, K.184. Symphony No. 32 in G major, K.318. Symphony No. 41 in C major, K.551, "Jupiter". Concertgebouw Orchestra** conducted by **Karl Böhm**. Philips ABL3102 (12 in., 38s. 3d.).

*Symphony No. 32:*  
 Berlin Chamber, Benda (2/56) TM68048  
*Symphony No. 41:*  
 See next page

It was a happy thought to put these two "one-movement" symphonies together on to a side (though No. 26 really has three movements, each leading into the next), especially as no other recording of the earlier one is available—and a remarkable piece it is, too. Both performances are excellent, here and there wanting a little more care that every note of a phrase tells, and in the 3/8 finale of No. 32 a little more vitality. The middle *andante* of No. 26 is most beautifully played and I prefer Böhm's *allegro spiritoso* to Benda's. This other version is also admirable but Benda seems to use a bigger orchestra than Böhm does and the result is just slightly less truly Mozartian.

Böhm's performance of the *Jupiter* certainly ranks high, as one would expect. The slow movement is perhaps a little on the fast side and I don't know that I like the sense of slight hurry in the more *agitato* passages, but if one is not quite content with that, his playing of the Minuet is superb and the Finale is entirely convincing in its performance.

Not, however, entirely convincing in its recording, for here the resonance of the Concertgebouw (presumably) impairs the

vital clarity of the texture which in any wholly satisfying performance one must have. It is not so over-resonant as the Vox disc, reviewed below, but still nothing like as clear as one would wish. There is also—a far less important point—too much bassoon. It is seldom that one has to complain of this in a Mozart performance for generally one cannot hear the bassoon adequately; but here its solos are just a little out of proportion—especially in balance with the flute in the Finale—and even in the loudest tutti it is determined to be heard.

Yet this is a greatly satisfying version of the symphony, and since one also acquires those too fine earlier symphonies, the disc is much to be recommended.

Couplings apart, my own choice for the *Jupiter* is still Klemperer's performance which really does make the work sound as overwhelmingly great as it really is. And I differ from M.M. in his view of Klemperer's reading of No. 29 on the reverse. It has always seemed to me that most conductors go astray in playing Mozart's *allegro moderato* of the first movement as a fast two-in-the-bar, which is not a Mozart *allegro moderato*. So I cannot subscribe to M.M.'s enthusiasm for Peter Maag's performance. There are clearly two views about this—but one is always delighted to find a great conductor supporting one's own!

The clearest version of the *Jupiter* is still Newstone's, and a very good performance it is, too, but the recording does sound a little dry these days. T.H.

**MOZART. Symphony No. 36 in C major, K.425, "Linz". Symphony No. 39 in E flat major, K.543. Chicago Symphony Orchestra** conducted by **Fritz Reiner**. H.M.V. ALP1403 (12 in., 39s. 74d.).

*Symphony No. 36:*  
 V.P.O., Boehm (4/51) LXT2558 or 2562  
 Berlin Chamber, Benda (7/55) LGX60420  
 R.P.O., Beecham (11/55) ABL3067  
 London Mozart, Blech (1/56) (H)CLP1063  
*Symphony No. 39:*  
 L.S.O., Krips (6/52) LXT2889  
 Glyndebourne, Gul (10/54) (H)ALP1165  
 R.P.O., Beecham (3/56) ABL3094  
 Bamberg S.O., Keilberth (7/56) LGX60054

These are swift, athletic performances, extremely neatly played. The finale of the *Linz*, indeed, is a considerable feat of sheer virtuosity on the part of the players. Many are satisfied with this kind of approach to Mozart, but even so, I think Reiner goes too far in the way of quick speeds. Surely the slow movements of both symphonies have more in them than is shown here—that of No. 39 is played almost as a delicate *allegretto*. And both finales go at a terrific lick. That of the *Linz* is certainly marked *presto* but I doubt if that warrants the extreme speed taken here: the other finale is marked merely *allegro* and while lumbering speeds some conductors adopt are to be deplored, it is perfectly possible to be lively without playing as fast as possible. Besides, as so often happens when extreme speeds are adopted, a sense of hurry sometimes creeps in.

Blech does the more athletic style of Mozart playing exceedingly well and his record of the *Linz* will greatly satisfy you if



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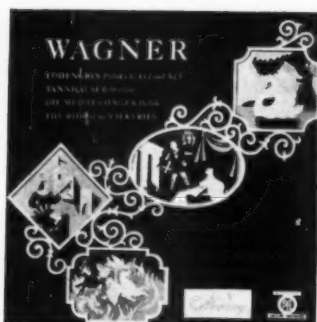
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you like it that way. If you like a more expressive approach, one that allows Mozart to have more depth of feeling, then Beecham is at his best in his recording, while Bruno Walter in his extremely interesting record, reviewed on this page, has considered the mood of every phrase and gives a wonderfully satisfying account of this great symphony.

As to the choice of recordings of the E flat Symphony, A.P. plumps firmly for Gui. I should myself choose Beecham, though I do not greatly enjoy his performance of the G minor on the reverse. So perhaps it does come back to Gui, with his Haydn No. 95 on the other side.

The recording of the new disc, by the way, is excellent, with particularly good balance, but over-resonance fills up the empty spaces too much, especially in the opening of the *Linz* and in the finale of the E flat.

T.H.

**MOZART. Symphony No. 40 in G minor, K.550. Symphony No. 41 in G major, K.551, "Jupiter". Bamberg Symphony conducted by Janel Perlea. Vox PL9450 (12 in., 39s. 7½d.).**

*Coupled as above:*

Champs-Élysées, Scherchen (12/54) DTL93020

*Symphony No. 40:*

L.P.O., Kleiber (11/50) LX3022

L.S.O., Krips (10/53) LXT2819

London Mozart, Blech (1/54) (H)CLP1009

Minneapolis S.O., Dorati (6/54) MG50010

V.P.O., Munchinger (5/56) LXT5124

R.P.O., Beecham (3/56) ABL3094

Vienna State Op. Orch., Prohaska (6/56) PVL7014

*Symphony No. 41:*

L.S.O., Krips (12/50) LX3010

R.P.O., Beecham (10/52) 33C1002

Haydn Orch., Newstone (1/53) MWL302

N.Y. S.O., Walter (12/53) 38CX1082

Pittsburgh S.O., Steinberg (12/54) CXL7053

Philharmonia, Klemperer (10/55) 33CX1257

Berlin, R.I.A.S., Fricsay (2/56) DGI6083

There does not seem much call for further versions of these greatest of Mozart symphonies unless they have the quality of greatness in their performance, and Perlea hardly gives us interpretations of that sort, competently done as they for the most part are. His speed for the Minuet (marked *allegretto*) of the G minor seems excessive and misses the striding strength of this wonderful movement. In the slow movement of the *Jupiter* ensemble is not always quite impeccable.

But detailed criticism of the performance is made unnecessary by a fault of the recording which is far too resonant, especially for the finale of the *Jupiter*, with its swift, close counterpoint. Indeed, as I listen to other recording companies' versions of this symphony I find very little appreciation of the fact that the kind of acoustic that may well suit the Prelude to *Tristan*, say, is quite unsuitable for Mozart. On this new disc empty bars are half filled with "hang-over", Mozart's springing rhythms are not really clear in tutti passages, vital middle parts and basses simply do not come through clearly. But half the life of any good Mozart performance comes from the vitality of its bass, the clarity of its texture, so that on this ground alone I cannot recommend this record.

For performances of the G minor, Blech seems to me still to hold the field, with Beecham there for those who like a con-

siderably different approach. But for myself I shall wait and hope that Philips will issue the Bruno Walter record already out in America.

As to other versions of the *Jupiter*, I have mentioned those in the notice of Böhm's record on page 202.

T.H.

**MOZART. "The Birth of a Performance". Rehearsal and performance of Symphony No. 36 in C major, K.425, "Linz". Columbia Symphony Orchestra conducted by Bruno Walter. Philips ABL3161-2 (two 12 in., 76s. 6d.).**

This is a record that everybody who has any real interest in orchestral music or in Mozart should have. Three of the sides are taken up by rehearsal of each of the symphony's movements, rehearsal which was quite evidently itself not "rehearsed", and they are a revelation of the greatness of an interpretive artist and a demonstration of what is to be found in one particular Mozart symphony (and to a great extent in all Mozart) that most listeners would never appreciate merely from hearing the finished performance. Whether you agree or not with Walter's approach to Mozart, your understanding of the composer will be vastly increased. This is indeed a fascinating issue.

No better conductor could have been picked on, for Walter's rehearsals have always been illuminating to hear, largely because he explains what he wants clearly and convincingly—unlike Toscanini, for instance, whose players always seemed to know precisely what he wanted but who was often difficult to follow if you were merely eavesdropping at the back of the hall.

For one reason alone I hope all amateur players and students will buy this record—to notice the endless trouble Walter takes over precise note-values and rhythms. Listen to his rehearsal of the very first bar. It goes on with endless patience; you will think that it sounds well played the first time you hear it—but just see the difference when the players really are taking the trouble over lengths of notes (and rests) upon which he insists.

And quite apart from the intense musical interest, what human warmth stands out in the conductor's personality. Like any great artist he is never satisfied till he gets what he wants, but the way in which this particular great artist gets it is lovely to hear. "My friends", he is perpetually saying, and you know how he regards his players as co-operating with him in the making of great music; and then, when he wants something again for the *n*th time, "Come", in a tone of voice any player would find hard to resist.

To enjoy these records fully a miniature score is invaluable, of course, but if you cannot get far with a score, I still beg you to get them and just listen. And if you really cannot run to the two discs (but I hope you will) then try the first, which has the complete rehearsal of the first movement on one side and the performance of the whole symphony on the reverse.

And the performance is fine indeed. I

am not going to compare it with other versions because if you don't want to hear any rehearsing, you won't choose this disc anyway. But I am sure you will miss something very important if you neglect this issue.

T.H.

**MOZART. Serenade No. 13 in G major, "Eine kleine Nachtmusik". Overture "Le Nozze di Figaro", K.492. Overture "Cosi fan Tutte", K.588. Overture "Die Zauberflöte", K.620. Philharmonia Orchestra conducted by Rudolf Kempe. H.M.V. BLP1088 (10 in., 29s. 6½d.).**

Perhaps the *Cosi fan Tutte* overture lacks an ounce or two of sparkle, but otherwise there is little to fault on this disc and much to praise. The playing is full of vitality, and it is pleasant to hear the woodwind so well in the picture. In so many Mozart discs they sound as though diffident about intruding on the all-powerful string section, whereas they should be on terms of absolute equality with the strings. Even here they cannot quite balance the strings in those quick descending scales at the end of the *Figaro* overture; I have never heard this passage come off except at Glyndebourne in the Fritz Busch days. *Eine kleine Nachtmusik* receives what one might call an orchestral as opposed to a chamber music performance, and a very good one too; repeats in the slow movement, but not in the first. This would be an excellent record for schools, and indeed for anyone who wants some of Mozart's shorter and more popular pieces on one disc played as they should be. The sound quality is superb.

R.F.

**PAGANINI. Concerto No. 1 in D major, Op. 6. Yehudi Menuhin (violin), London Symphony Orchestra conducted by Anatole Fistoulari.**

**SIBELIUS. Concerto in D minor, Op. 47. Yehudi Menuhin (violin), London Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Sir Adrian Boult. H.M.V. ALP1350 (12 in., 39s. 7½d.).**

*Paganini Concerto:*

Rabin, Philharmonia, Matalic (10/55) 33CX1281

Ricci, L.S.O., Collins (10/55) LXT6076

*Sibelius Concerto:*

See und r Bruch, p. 200

This is an exceedingly musical performance of the Paganini. The cuts are few and well-arranged; the tempos remain decently steady, chosen obviously in relation to the music rather than to the violinists, where these requirements differ; the orchestral playing under Fistoulari is extremely good, as bright and pointed as it comes. But most listeners to a Paganini concerto will surely consider these virtues, while very real, to be also merely subsidiary ones, reserving their enthusiasm principally for a high degree of dazzlement in the solo-playing. This Menuhin does not really provide. His

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playing is not here insipid, and in no way lacks anything of attack or vitality: but it seems to wish to declare only a believable mastery of the instrument, not an unbelievable one. In some of the impossible passages in harmonics so much dust is swept up along with the notes; in some of the more unplayable passages of double-stopping intonation is offered that is just off, when the world boasts a handful of soloists in league with the devil who can with his assistance offer intonation that is just on.

The Sibelius concerto is of course less exacting, or perhaps it is that its strictly musical qualities make it seem less so. But the attack that Menuhin found for the Paganini seems to have to some extent deserted him for the Sibelius; he gives a musical but a somewhat indecisive performance. That he should land up on the last note of the work distinctly after the orchestra does not in itself matter very much; but that the momentary lapse, in such a place, was found acceptable is perhaps symptomatic. The generally good recording, too, has its momentary lapses: the important viola solo in the first movement is scarcely audible, and on two occasions a very audible rumble invades the music.

This Menuhin version shares with the new Gitlis (reviewed under Bruch, p. 200) the virtue of being complete on one side of the record. It is the better recorded of the two, rumbles apart; but Gitlis brings a considerably greater intensity to bear on the solo part. Both versions are of course more convenient than the double-sided Oistrakh ten-inch Columbia; but neither seems to me to be preferable to it.

In the case of the Paganini Concerto Menuhin must, unexpectedly, yield not to Ricci so much as to Michael Rabin, who gives an entirely incredible display of superhuman violin-playing. His Columbia disc, with the Glazounov Concerto for backing, has only one drawback for the listener who is also a violinist: it just can't be true. M.M.

**PROKOFIEV. Symphony No. 1 in D major, Op. 25, "Classical".**

**RAVEL. Bolero.**

**TCHAIKOVSKY. Serenade for Strings, Op. 48. RIAS Symphony Orchestra, Berlin, conducted by Ferenc Fricsay. D.G.G. DGM18336 (12 in., 39s. 7½d.).**

This seems a curious miscellany, rather like those offers wine merchants put out round about Christmas: a bottle of port, sherry and claret, all done up together. The Prokofiev is a winner of a performance. The RIAS orchestra is known to be a good one but surely they excel themselves in sheer virtuosity in the finale of this symphony. It is a specially difficult one for the violins but it is brought off here at a tremendous speed and with the greatest skill. I like it enormously, except that I wish the second subject of this movement had been kept more rhythmic. How often great speed leads players into this trap when an easier bit comes along. But still, the whole thing is delightfully done and excellently recorded.

As, indeed, is the rest of this record. The

*Bolero* is put through its paces most effectively and the Tchaikovsky Serenade shows very good string playing. There is more in the Elegy than Fricsay admits—slightly slower speeds all round would have helped—but perhaps his view is that this is after all part of a Serenade, music of lightish character, and so the emotion of its slow movement should be restrained.

An odd gathering of pieces but extremely well done. T.H.

**RACHMANINOV. Concerto No. 2 in C minor, Op. 18. Moment Musical in E minor, Op. 16, No. 4. Prelude in G major, Op. 32, No. 5. Benno Moiseiwitsch (piano), Philharmonia Orchestra conducted by Hugo Rignold. H.M.V. CLP1094 (12 in., 39s. 11½d.).**

**Concerto No. 2:**  
Katchen, N.S.O., Fistolari (8/51) LXT2505  
Lympny, Philharmonia, Malko (11/53) (H)CLP1007  
Anda, Philharmonia, Galliera (9/54) 35CX1145  
De Groot, Hague P.O., Otterloo (12/54) ABL3014  
Farnadi, V. Op., Scherchen (1/55) WLP5193  
Pennario, St. Louis S.O., Golschmann (10/55) CTL7093  
Fruzoni, V.P.M., Byrns (8/56) PL9650  
Curzon, L.P.O., Boulit (6/56) LXT5178  
Feldes, Berlin P.O., Ludwig (7/56) DGM18190  
Malinin, Philharmonia, Ackermann (9/56) 35CX1369

Recordings of Rachmaninov's Second are now averaging one a month, and appear with roughly the frequency of performances in London concert halls. Not that I wish Moiseiwitsch had been deterred from recording this music; after all, his is the interpretation on which most of us have been brought up. But I would like to express a mild hope that the rate will slacken a little in the coming year; there are already excellent interpretations to suit every taste.

There is no doubt at all that this is one of the really good ones. Moiseiwitsch plays this music with complete understanding and sympathy. Only the balance prevents whole-hearted praise. In a sense this is Mr. Rignold's record, for surely this is the performance the conductor heard. The piano is just under one's nose, clatteringly close at the recapitulation in the first movement, and some microphone juggling brings the woodwind near enough for you to light their cigarettes for them when they have a few bars rest. It may be that the conductor hears better than anyone, though personally I prefer what you get in a good seat in the stalls. But there will be plenty of listeners who will find an added excitement in this balance. I do not think the quality of the sound equals that on Columbia's Malinin disc, but you will find the interpretation more what you are used to. The playing is more rubato than Curzon's or Pennario's and some will prefer Curzon's steely brilliance and less sentimental approach.

I must add that Moiseiwitsch throws in a very difficult Moment Musical and one of the most attractive of the preludes, and plays both of them quite beautifully.

R.F.

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**RACHMANINOV. Symphony No. 2 in E minor, Op. 27. Leningrad Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Kurt Sanderling. D.G.G. DGM18327 (12 in., 39s. 7½d.).**

Pittsburgh SO, Steinberg (8/55) CTL7085

The conductor of a super-romantic symphony must beware of giving too super-romantic an interpretation lest he expose only the work's weaknesses. This is exactly what Kurt Sanderling does.

Take the slow movement, the one that really shows this interpretation up. Every *diminuendo* in the score is made the excuse for a substantial *ritenuto* as well, small "hair-pin" *crescendi* are often large surges of emotion, the tone of the violins swells and dies all over the place, rubato is indulged in large quantities. It must all have taken a lot of rehearsal. The result is not only to weaken the work but to weaken its impact even on our emotions. Steinberg's performance is far more moving because it is more controlled, and as a result there shows a nobility that makes the work something worth listening to as a musical experience. This sort of music presents a great problem to the interpreter—how far to go. Sanderling goes much too far.

The vigorous parts of the Symphony are well done, though even here he does not get quite the rhythm that Steinberg does, in the second subject of the finale, for instance. The Leningrad orchestra plays extremely well and does everything the conductor asks. The recording, though rich and of wonderful depth, is not clear enough for one to hear what is going on in the middle of the orchestra—but how often does one wonder if a recording expert is a good enough musician to think about the middle of the orchestral score.

Those who enjoy Rachmaninov as much as I do, and respect him too, will surely be far more deeply satisfied by Steinberg's performance. T.H.

**SCHUBERT. Symphony No. 3 in D major, D.200. Symphony No. 6 in C major, D.589. London Mozart Players conducted by Harry Blech. H.M.V. CLP1090 (12 in., 39s. 11½d.).**

**Symphony No. 3:**  
Cincinnati S.O., Johnson (10/51) LXT2004  
Berlin P.O., Markevitch (1/56) DGM18321  
Concertgebouw, Beinum (3/56) ABL3068  
**Symphony No. 6:**  
L.S.O., Krips (8/51) LXT2865  
Bamberg S.O., Keilberth (4/55) LGM65028  
R.P.O., Beecham (9/56) 35CX1363

The coupling of these two symphonies stresses their similarity; in both Schubert is feeling his way from an easy lyricism to an as yet rather uneasy dramatic style. The London Mozart Players respond always to the composer's moods, producing insouciance for the tunes and vigor for the attack for the passage-work between; these are very good performances indeed. The two finales go exceptionally well; to that of the Third Symphony Blech brings a welcome vigour, and to that of the Sixth, an extremely difficult movement to bring off, a choice of tempo that is wholly effective. It also happens to be Schubert's own: *allegro moderato*.

The recording is also consistently good, with two minor reservations as to balance

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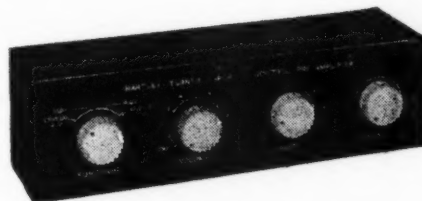


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in the Third Symphony. Here in the first movement much depends on fluent and easy-going solo clarinet playing; this is certainly offered by the player concerned, but deprived of something of its effect by being rather backwardly balanced. Matters are put right, however, from the second movement onward. The Trio of the third movement, again, allows the oboe, this time, to be rather shielded by the bassoon.

This Third Symphony competes, too, in a very strong field, in which I would suggest that the new Blech version ranks only with, rather than above, two first-class existing versions. On Markevitch's D.G.G., with the Schubert Fourth Symphony for backing, the Berlin Philharmonic plays exceptionally smoothly and is most beautifully recorded; but the performance of the finale is comparatively dull. Van Beinum's Philips offers an electrifying finale, but is marginally less well recorded. Here, however, the backing rather dominates the situation, for the Schubert comes on the odd side of a two-disc set (ABL3086/7) of the Bruckner Eighth Symphony—an admirable version of the monumental work, but scarcely one to be acquired by accident, thinking only of the innocent Schubert.

In the case of the Sixth Symphony the new Blech version seems to me to be more clearly the most desirable of all. For its only serious competitor is Beecham's Columbia version, with the Grieg *In Autumn and Old Norwegian Romance* for backing; and here the Royal Philharmonic's playing is exquisitely sensitive, and the recording quite acceptable, yet the symphony as a whole seems to me to fall flat in effect because of an eccentric reading of the last movement. This Beecham plays (until the very end, reached rather hastily after some cutting) not as if it were an *Allegro moderato* finale but an *Allegretto* middle movement; the reading results, arguably, in good music, but scarcely in a good symphonic finale.

Blech is more reasonable; and his reading of the movement concludes satisfactorily not merely the Schubert symphony as such but also a record that is very good from any point of view. M.M.

**STRAUSS. Tod und Verklärung, Op. 24. Till Eulenspiegels Lustige Streiche, Op. 28. N.B.C. Symphony Orchestra** conducted by Arturo Toscanini. H.M.V. ALP1404 (12 in., 39s. 7½d.).

*Coupled as above:*  
V.P.O., Krauss (Till), Mengelberg (Tod) (3/55) LGX00082  
Pittsburgh S.O., Steinberg (7/55) CTL7086  
Bamberg S.O., Horenstein (8/55) PL9060

*Tod und Verklärung:*

*See below*

*Till Eulenspiegel:*  
Vienna P.O., Krauss (1/51) LXT2549  
Philharmonia, Karajan (10/52) 33CX1001  
Concertgebouw, Jochum (10/54) ABR4009  
V.P.O., Furtwaengler (1/55) (H)ALP1208  
Berlin P.O., Fricsay (1/56) DGI6006  
Philadelphia, Ormandy (11/56) SBR6211

I had high hopes that the Toscanini *Till* would equal his superlative record of *Don Juan* but this does not turn out to be so. *Don Juan* was a studio recording: both these new sides were taken from 1952 performances in Carnegie Hall and the recorded sound accounts for a great deal of the disappointment. These pieces obviously

need a wonderfully rich quality, whereas here the sound is hard, especially for *Death and Transfiguration*, and, in *Till*, rather limited in dynamic range.

That will not deter Toscanini enthusiasts nor should it deter anyone who can afford second recordings of these works, for quite obviously such a master always has new light to shed on familiar music. The performance of *Till* is particularly interesting, though I wonder very much if it is as good as those Toscanini gave in his younger years. Not a point in the score is missed and many of those points you may never have realised before, yet there turns out to be every justification for them in the score.

Toscanini often takes an extraordinarily steady speed for the work's basic tempo, one that does not always convincingly bear out Strauss's *sehr lebhaft* (which the composer constantly reiterates in the score as a reminder) and which Krauss's performance, which had the composer's approval, always conveys. The epilogue is very slow and even sentimental (strange for Toscanini), again not as Krauss (and as one remembers, Strauss himself) did it.

An always interesting performance, in fact, but somehow not with the definitive quality that Toscanini so often managed to give his interpretations.

*Death and Transfiguration* is much less successful, particularly owing to the very hard recorded sound—even in the quiet parts it is not a sensitive sound. The first flute melody comes in over-loudly, at one point the oboe soloist doesn't sound entirely happy, a number of such things detract from the success of the whole. The audience, too, is a little tiresome, not through the usual coughing so much as in general restlessness.

In spite of all this it is important to make it clear that the record is a valuable one, simply because it will remain the only record we have of Toscanini in these works.

For comparative views on the various other versions, please see below the last of this month's Strauss notices. T.H.

**STRAUSS. R. Don Juan, Op. 20. Tod und Verklärung, Op. 24. L'Orchestre de la Société des Concerts du Conservatoire de Paris** conducted by Hans Knappertsbusch. Decca LXT5239 (12 in., 39s. 7½d.).

*Coupled as above:*  
Bamberg S.O., Horenstein (8/55) PL9060

*Don Juan:*  
Vienna P.O., Krauss (1/51) LXT2549  
Philharmonia, Karajan (10/52) 33CX1001  
N.B.C. S.O., Toscanini (9/54) (H)ALP1173  
Concertgebouw, Jochum (10/54) ABR4009  
V.P.O., Furtwaengler (1/55) (H)ALP1208

*Tod und Verklärung:*  
Concertgebouw, Mengelberg (3/55) LGX00082  
Pittsburgh S.O., Steinberg (7/55) CTL7086  
N.B.C. S.O., Toscanini (11/56) (H)ALP1404

This record is a welcome one in that, while I do not think it carries the entirely best version of either work, it is without any possible doubt the best coupling of the two. And as both performances are certainly good ones and the recording is acceptable, you have a most satisfying record if you want just these two works.

*Death and Transfiguration* is admirably done and only just misses equalling Horenstein's

outstanding performance—but that has a far less satisfying other side. Knappertsbusch is much more restless at the start, effectively so, and gives all the later romantic parts their full sweep and power. My only real disappointment came towards the end, the moment where the whole orchestra runs upwards in a rapidly fading *diminuendo* to *pp*, at which point the gong, marked *mf*, sends a shiver down the spine. At least, that is what ought to happen, but it doesn't happen here, nor, I have to admit, does it come off much more effectively in Horenstein's performance.

But no doubt Knappertsbusch does the piece well, as he also does *Don Juan*. He has one very odd tempo (just after letter P in the score) which does not seem to me a good one and which is anyway much slower than the composer's marking, but the performance as a whole is telling.

On this side I found the recording just a bit less successful. There is still the good orchestral sound but as I listened I became increasingly conscious that the trumpets were dominating the tutti too much and my ear got tired of them. And one smaller point: the *ppp* glockenspiel near the start sounds very loud and businesslike instead of adding just that delicate touch of colour that is intended.

But there is no doubt that any such reservations weigh little against the over-all success of this record, an admirable coupling of the two works. T.H.

**STRAUSS, R. Till Eulenspiegels Lustige Streiche, Op. 28. Waltzes from "Der Rosenkavalier", Op. 59. Philadelphia Orchestra** conducted by Eugene Ormandy. Philips SBR6211 (10 in., 24s.).

A 10-inch *Till* always has that to be said for it and this is a sound one into the bargain. It is not the most vivid performance—no performance can quite be that when the opening horn theme is never played with a real *crescendo* down to the lowest note. And sometimes Ormandy lets the basic tempo flag a little. But generally it goes well, as does also the recording.

But those who take their Strauss seriously will want some better coupling than the *pol-pourri* of Rosenkavalier waltzes that fills the other side of this record, a side that is certainly well played and recorded but hasn't much to commend it musically. So there seems little point in making detailed comparison of this *Till Eulenspiegel* with earlier versions, all of which have something better for company. Those who want the waltzes will find themselves with a performance of *Till Eulenspiegel* that is acceptable. T.H.

**Recommended performances of the above Strauss Tone-Poems.**

Considering the works separately first and neglecting couplings, the best version of *Don Juan* is undoubtedly Toscanini's, a superlative performance in a vivid recording. That is easy to decide. With *Till Eulenspiegel* it is more difficult, but I should myself still go for Clemens Krauss, especially now that Decca's latest pressings improve on the original ones (and even these are still good).



I mean, by the way, LXT2549 and not the Telefunken Krauss disc, which is of considerably earlier date. Of course, there are other admirable performances, notably Karajan's, but Krauss was the composer's favourite interpreter and his readings therefore have a definitive quality that none of the others can quite claim.

As to *Death and Transfiguration* I have made clear my preference for Horenstein's performance, though I recommend it without reference to the much less successful performances on its other side.

Taking couplings into consideration, I would suggest—*Till Eulenspiegel* and *Don Juan*: Krauss—or Karajan.

*Don Juan* and *Death and Transfiguration*: the new Knappertsbusch, without doubt.

*Till Eulenspiegel* and *Death and Transfiguration*: Horenstein, who gets *Don Juan* on to the disc into the bargain, but in not a very winning performance.

I should add that Telefunken LGX66032 is in a special class. Its Krauss *Till* is of little interest since the later Decca is so much better: but on the reverse is a reissue of that great Strauss conductor, Mengelberg, doing *Death and Transfiguration*, which is of great historical interest even though its recording is naturally poor by present standards. T.H.

**STRAVINSKY.** (a) *Concerto in D major for Violin and Orchestra.* (b) *Duo Concertant.* *Ivry Gitlis* (violin) with (a) *Concerts Colonne Orchestra* conducted by *Harold Byrns*, (b) *Charlotte Zelka* (piano). *Jeu de Cartes.* *Bamberg Symphony* conducted by *Heinrich Hollreiser*. Vox PL9410 (12 in., 39s. 7½d.).

*Duo Concertant:*  
Fuchs, Smit (8/54) AXTL 1047

Obviously extremely good value, this disc, so far as quality goes. The only other version of the *Duo Concertant* takes a whole side: here, it is sandwiched between two other 21-minute works. It means breaking it up, of course, but that is of no great consequence; there is no perceptible change of recorded quality between the two sides. *Ivry Gitlis* is a player of temperament, well suited to this rhapsodic type of music, and the beauty of his tone is apparent in the *Dithyrambe* (to my mind one of Stravinsky's most moving pages), though he is made to sound strident in the *Gigue* (which he takes excessively steadily). In this latter movement, the unanimity between him and his very able partner is not always completely secure. As to balance, the violin is very reverberant, the piano rather distant: I prefer the cleaner, more trenchant quality of the Brunswick recording.

However, since the *Duo* is intelligently coupled with the other work which Stravinsky wrote for Dushkin, the *Concerto*—this is in fact the first recording since that by the dedicatee—most Stravinsky-lovers will go for this disc. The *Concerto* makes too infrequent appearance in concert and radio programmes, and will probably be unknown to many musicians. *Gitlis* furnishes brilliant virtuosity—he has both *brío* and *grace*—and he is aided by *Harold Byrns's* exemplary

orchestral accompaniment. The troublesome balance of the opening, however—trumpets answered by oboes, all over bassoon-and-horn oom-chas—could with advantage have been given further consideration; and the trumpets are too loud in other places also.

*Jeu de Cartes*, the "ballet in three deals" written for Balanchine, is the big disappointment here. The score, flirting as it does with Rossini's *Barber of Seville* (why? is there some subtle point I should know and don't?), Tchaikovsky, Johann Strauss and Stravinsky's own works, is a sparkling one; and this is the only LP version available. But the playing is not more than fair, and the balance definitely unsatisfactory; and the acoustics, in this piece which imperatively calls for sharply-defined, incisive lines, are far too woolly. L.S.

**TCHAIKOVSKY.** *Concerto No. 1 in B flat minor, Op. 23.* *Emil Gilels* (piano), *Chicago Symphony Orchestra* conducted by *Fritz Reiner*. H.M.V. ALP1402 (12 in., 39s. 7½d.).

|                                     |                    |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------|
| Curzon, New S.O., Szell             | (1/51) LXT2559     |
| Solomon, Philharmonia, Dobrowen     | (10/52) (H)CLP1001 |
| Bruchollerie, V. Phil., Moralt      | (7/53) PL7720      |
| Anda, Philharmonia, Galliera        | (11/54) 33CX1156   |
| Uninsky, Hague P.O., Otterloo       | (3/55) ABR4020     |
| Cherkassky, Berlin P.O., Ludwig     | (5/55) DGM18013    |
| Bachauer, New London Orch., Sherman | (9/55) (H)CLP1049  |
| Badura-Skoda, P.P.O., Boulton       | (7/56) NCL16013    |
| Katchen, L.S.O., Gamba              | (8/56) LXT5164     |

This is a performance that gets more and more gripping as it proceeds. Gilels and Reiner take the introduction in a solid, serious way—as Petri used to do it—and the first movement generally has little glamour about it. The Andantino is not romanticized; but the performance takes wing at the *prestissimo* section. The finale has powerful momentum rather than sparkle.

Personally, I like a more fanciful approach—hence my unwavering preference for the Cherkassky recording—but the virtues of the new performance will doubtless appeal to many listeners. Technically it is highly impressive; Gilels's fingers never takes one's breath away in the way that Cherkassky's can, but they execute with unflinching exactness everything that they are called on to do. The recording, as if to match the performance, lacks allure, and there are no seductive pieces of orchestral playing; but in its austere way the sound is true and easy to reproduce.

It is only fair to add that the Katchen version has found favour with many; and that it gives one an excellent account of the Liszt's Hungarian Fantasia in addition to the concerto. The Anda performance has a filler: Dohnanyi's paraphrase of the *Coppelia* Waltz. All other versions take two sides. A.P.

**TANEIEV.** *Suite de Concert, Op. 28.* *David Oistrakh* (violin), *Philharmonia Orchestra* conducted by *Nicolai Malko*. Columbia 33CX1390 (12 in., 39s. 7½d.).

Serge Taneiev, Director of the Moscow Conservatoire, pupil of Tchaikovsky, and teacher of Scriabin and Rachmaninov, was

the great academic of Russia. "As Taneiev used to say . . ." is probably as remorselessly on the lips of a generation of Russian musicians as "As Stanford used to say . . ." is of English or "As Tovey used to say . . ." of Scottish; one hopes that the observations of the Russian professor were as unfailingly illuminating as those of the Irish and Scottish invariably are.

Certain it is that the LP catalogue, in offering hitherto only a dreary *Oresteia* overture, has sadly underrated Taneiev as a composer; for this *Suite de Concert* may be thought a most agreeable work. It is lengthy, with five substantial movements, but not unduly long-winded; for it covers in its course quite a wide range of mood, from a reflective intermezzo-type movement to a final *Tarantella* with some solo-display pretensions.

These pretensions are not all-pervading, though they do include a cadenza in the middle, curiously, of the variation movement. But they fulfil the highly desirable function of allowing Oistrakh to offer his powerful advocacy of the work; whether engaged on the cadenza or a simple tune the beauty of his playing shows the music in the best of all possible lights. The Philharmonia play beautifully, too, assisted by the unexpected effectiveness of the scoring; and the whole is very well recorded.

I am conscious of having joined the LP catalogue in underestimating Taneiev, in my mind, in the past; and am very glad indeed to have had the opportunity of being corrected in such agreeable fashion.

M.M.

**VERDI.** "Sicilian Vespers"—Overture. "Nabucco"—Overture. "The Force of Destiny"—Overture. "La Traviata"—Preludes, Acts 1 and 3. *RIAS Symphony Orchestra, Berlin*, conducted by *Ferenc Fricsay*. D.G.G. DG17015 (10 in., 29s. 6½d.).

This is admirably done in every way. The performances are all excellent with, indeed, a great deal of exceptionally good playing, and the recording is a pleasure to hear. There is an older record (Columbia 33SX1009) on which Galliera conducts all these pieces, plus the Prelude to *Aida* (it is a 12-inch) but unless you insist on having the *Aida* piece this new 10-inch is both better played and better recorded.

T.H.

#### Correction

On p. 172 of the October issue P.H.-W. inadvertently suggested that Furtwängler's *Fidelio* was recorded just after the opening of the new "Vienna Opera". This of course should have read "Vienna Festival", the one held in 1953.

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## CHAMBER MUSIC

**BACH. Concerto for Harpsichord and Orchestra No. 1 in D minor, BWV1052. Concerto for Harpsichord and Orchestra No. 2 in E major, BWV1053. Helma Elsner (harpsichord), Pro Musica Orchestra, Stuttgart, conducted by Rolf Reinhardt. Vox PL9510 (12 in., 39s. 7½d.).**

*Concerto No. 1:*  
Zimmler Sinfonietta (6/53) AXTL1012  
Reinhardt, Pro Arte Chamb. Orch., R. del (10/56) DTL93067  
Richter, Ansbach Bach Ensemble (10/56) LXT5203

Only last month I was reviewing a record of this D minor concerto played by Rolf Reinhardt, and on this month's version he is the conductor. His performance and Miss Elsner's are in many ways very similar, though she chooses rather steadier tempos, being noticeably slower in the middle movement. She makes rather heavy weather of the difficult passage leading up to the *Adagio* bar near the end of the last movement—Reinhardt tosses this off without having to interrupt the flow of the music—but is rock-like in the repeated note episode and final cadenza in the first movement. Just as Richter's is the most exuberant performance (and his slow movement is the best of the lot), Miss Elsner's is the most restrained. But on the whole I am inclined to put Reinhardt's at the top, if only by a very narrow margin. Also I personally enjoy the F minor and A major concertos which back the D minor on Reinhardt's disc better than the E major which backs it on Miss Elsner's. She plays this E major very well, and the strings perform prodigies of self-effacement, which they need to do for Miss Elsner uses much less 16-foot tone than in the D minor and generally registers the music more quietly. But apart from the pleasant slow movement, it is not one of Bach's great works, and falls far short of the D minor. But he must have thought well of it for he later incorporated each movement in a cantata.

I was very conscious of problems of balance during this E major concerto. Most musicians are against the constant use of 16-foot tone in a harpsichord concerto, but if you do without it then the harpsichord can only be really clear if the string accompaniment is so soft as to be barely audible. I sometimes wonder if there is any real evidence that Bach wrote these accompaniments for a string band; I know of none. I would dearly love to hear some of these concertos played by a harpsichord and string quartet, and I suspect that this is the combination for which they were intended; they would be much easier to balance convincingly. R.F.

**BARTOK. Sonata for Two Pianos and Percussion. Edith Picht-Axenfeld and Carl Seemann (pianos), L. Porth and K. Peinkofer (percussion). D.G.G. DG16021 (10 in., 29s. 6½d.).**

Though we have had the chance of familiarising ourselves with the Sixth Quartet and the *Music for Strings, Percussion and Celesta* from records, we have had to wait a long time for the other masterpiece of this

late-1930s period of Bartók's output, the *Sonata for Two Pianos and Percussion*. It is a work of which a recording was very necessary, since it is heard infrequently on the Third Programme and practically never elsewhere in this country; and its extreme complexity makes it difficult to appreciate even for virtuoso score-readers. This complexity is of three kinds—free polychordal harmony (which nevertheless revolves round a basic tonality), elaborate rhythmic patterns and internal stresses, and subtleties of tone and timbre (the directions for playing the percussion parts reveal a desire to exploit all potentialities of the instruments employed).

It is gratifying that we should be offered a performance which not only takes in its stride the manifold problems of technique and ensemble posed by the Sonata, but has the requisite subtlety and care over nuance. So many performers of contemporary music give us efficiency but little more, and often one has to admire their skill in getting even that far; but here we have a real delicacy which clearly points to the players being musicians of imagination and insight. The recording, too, captures all the detail in true perspective. Warmly recommended. L.S.

**BEETHOVEN. String Quartet No. 5 in A major, Op. 18, No. 5. String Quartet No. 6 in B flat major, Op. 18, No. 6. The Budapest String Quartet. Philips ABL3125 (12 in., 38s. 3d.).**

*Coupled as above:*  
Hungarian Qt. (1/55) 33CX1191  
Quartet No. 6: (9/54) LXT2811  
Italian Qt.

The Budapest Quartet lack the syrup-smooth tone and glossy technique of the Hungarian Quartet; they do not play quite as fast (e.g. in the presto finale of the A major) and probably they would not wish to do so. Judged by the very highest standards, the leader's intonation is not always immaculate, and momentary untidinesses creep in here and there. And yet this is very accomplished playing, full of good sense and understanding, and there is not in fact much to choose between the two ensembles. There is however a great deal to choose between the two recording qualities. The Hungarian Quartet was recorded somewhat distantly and allowed a great deal of resonance. The Budapest Quartet has been given a more imminent balance and much less resonance, and sounds to my ears more like a real quartet. The new disc seems to have rather more top on it than the older one, and you may find it a little shrill, but the quality can be made splendidly vivid and exciting. The Italian Quartet, who link Beethoven's Op. 18, No. 6, with Haydn's Op. 77, No. 1, in G, are also well recorded, and give a goodish performance of the Beethoven. But if you are collecting Beethoven, you will have to choose between the technical brilliance of the Hungarian Quartet and the realistic balance of the Budapest; both discs are amply good enough to allow you to appreciate some fine music without the fear that a better recording is on the way. R.F.

**BEETHOVEN. Quartet No. 10 in E flat major, Op. 74, "Harp". Quartetto Italiano. Columbia 33CX1396 (12 in., 39s. 7½d.).**

Pascal Qt. (10/53) CLP1208  
Hungarian Qt. (6/55) 33CX1254

I started with a prejudice against this record, for the same firm that made it produced last year a disc with this and another Beethoven quartet on it for the same money; the Hungarian Quartet get the "Harp" on to one side and play the third Rasmusovsky on the other. But needless to say, Columbia would not have done this if there had been any other solution. The fact is that the Hungarian Quartet can play very, very fast, and they do. Reviewing them last June, D.S. warned readers against their version of the C major Rasmusovsky on the grounds of excessive speed, though he praised their version of the "Harp". It is certainly played with immense dexterity and sweetness of tone, but here, too, tempos are too fast at times. They take the *adagio* slow movement at 60 quavers a minute; the Italian Quartet take a broader and more sensible view of the music at 46 quavers a minute. As for the scherzo, the Hungarians put up one of the most astonishingly rapid performances it has ever been my pleasure to listen to. It is like a circus stunt, and though it is absurdly fast, I am bound to say that it makes the Italian Quartet version sound very clodhopping. Thus, although both quartets play all repeats, it was possible to get one version on to a single side, while the other (just under 35 minutes) won't fit.

The Hungarians are recorded rather distantly, with rather a lot of reverberation. The Italians are much more vivid and sound as though they were in the room with you. They are incomparably better in the slow movement, and, if price were no consideration, perhaps just to be preferred all round. This is in fact a notable performance, and most beautifully recorded. I have seldom heard such a wide dynamic range from a string quartet on a record. R.F.

**BEETHOVEN. Sonata for Violin and Piano No. 8 in G major, Op. 30, No. 3.**

**BRAHMS. Sonata for Violin and Piano No. 3 in D minor, Op. 108. Wolfgang Schneiderhan (violin), Friedrich Wührer (piano). D.G.G. DGM18144 (12 in., 39s. 7½d.).**

*Sonata, Op. 30:*  
Rost, Osborn (11/52) LXT2752  
Fuchs, Bala m (7/54) AXTL1052  
Menthin, K-nauer (10/56) (H)ALP1376  
*Sonata, Op. 108:*  
Ferraz, Barbizet (3/54) LGX66014  
de Vito, Fischer (1/56) (H)ALP1282

Schneiderhan and Wührer give intelligent, extremely competent and somewhat restrained performances of these two sonatas. They observe all the composers' expression marks—how rarely is this done!—and do not invent any of their own. All Schneiderhan's pianos are really soft, and it is a criticism of others that I add surprisingly so. The quiet opening of the Brahms sonata is beautifully managed. At the recapitulation in the slow movement Wührer plays the semiquaver triplets in the left hand staccato because Brahms puts dots



on each note; the point would not be worth mentioning if this were usually done. For some reason the piano's first chord in the last movement does not register, which is a pity as the piano has the tune. The balance is a little variable for some reason in the Brahms, and the piano tone is not always quite as rounded as one would like in the last three movements of this sonata. In the Beethoven, however, all is well, and the whole sonata beautifully played.

I think most of us would agree that the Beethoven is all it should be, but there will be at least two opinions about the Brahms. Ferras gives a much more romantic interpretation, and there is not much doubt that Brahms himself would have preferred his music played with more fire and passion than Schneiderhan brings to it. De Vito and Fischer are also more sensitive. Schneiderhan and Wührer give what might be called a classical performance of the music and if you like Brahms played that way, and many people do, you will think this a very fine performance. R.F.

**CORELLI. Concerto Grosso fatto per la notte di natale, Op. 6, No. 8.** Ulrich Grehling (violin), Otto Schaernack (violin), Gerhard Stenzel ('cello), Fritz Neumeyer (harpsichord), Capella Coloniensis conducted by August Wenzinger. D.G.G. Archive EPA37062 (7 in., 16s. 84d.).

For a little less than double the money you can buy two Corelli concertos, including this "Christmas" one, played by I Musici on Philips SBR6207, reviewed in September. But some people will be happy to have Op. 6, No. 8, on its own, and for them this new 45 version will make the perfect Christmas present. Wenzinger's performance is very similar to that given by I Musici, and that means that it is superlatively good. Perhaps I Musici have fresher, crisper tone, and I think they are recorded with a shade more clarity. But there is very little in it, and perhaps Wenzinger gets closer to the mystery of the final "Pastorale". I like the cadenzas he inserts at the pauses in this movement and at the end of the second *allegro*. Both recordings suffer from insufficient contrast in tone and volume between the three soloists and the string band. But both are well above the average run of recordings. And the music is glorious. R.F.

**BOCCHERINI. Quintet in D minor, Op. 25, No. 1. Quintet in C major, Op. 25, No. 3. Quintet in A major, Op. 29, No. 6—Largo Cantabile in D major only. Quintet in C major, Op. 42—Andante con moto only. Quintetto Boccherini.** H.M.V. ALP1406 (12 in., 39s. 74d.).

The monthly exploration of Boccherini continues, with further agreeable quarrying of the quintets. The D minor, with a dark grey introduction: Boccherini taking the same view of the key as Mozart, you think, until a cheerful *allegro* gets under way. A veiled and mysterious minuet then leads to a finale which ends curiously unconvincingly, and is not made to sound any more con-

vincing by running almost immediately into the odd *Andante* movement of the C major Quintet—a fine movement, but in the context a *non sequitur*.

The complete C major Quintet on the other side of the disc is also a fine one, with an attractive imitative opening used again at the end of the finale to frame the work. Then the frame bursts: another *non sequitur* with an odd—and most excellent—slow movement in an inappropriate key from yet another quintet. Are these records being arranged in the best way possible? In constantly filling out a side by following Boccherini's finale with an encore from somewhere else in his output are not his own ideas on how to put music together being consistently distorted? There is room in the catalogues for complete quintets, and also for odd movements; but it seems to me that to put both regularly on to the same disc is to fit the music—and by habit the listener—to the format of the record instead of the other way about.

Nevertheless this series remains an extremely attractive one, fortified here, as previously, by fine playing on the part of the Quintetto Boccherini and fine recording on the part of their engineers. M.M.

**MOZART. Quartet No. 17 in B flat, K.458, "Hunt". Quartet No. 23 in F major, K.590. Quatuor Haydn. H.M.V. CLPC14 (12 in., 39s. 114d.).**

|                 |                 |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| Quartet No. 17: |                 |
| Kroll Qt.       | (4/52) ALX86    |
| Griller Qt.     | (2/53) LXT2728  |
| Amadeus Qt.     | (12/53) WLF6009 |
| Loewenguth Qt.  | (2/56) DGL004   |
| Italian Qt.     | (9/56) 33CX1267 |
| Quartet No. 23: |                 |
| Italian Qt.     | (4/54) LXT2852  |
| Amadeus Qt.     | (2/55) WLF6002  |

Let me first dispose of some rival versions of K.458:

*Amadeus*: Recording quality rules them out of court.

*Loewenguth*: Uneconomic, with a single work on a ten-inch disc; also the performance is not too good.

*Italian*: Fair performance nicely recorded, except that it is recorded sharp; rather dull backing—Schubert's very early C major quartet.

The way seems wide open for the Quatuor Haydn, who, I was surprised to discover, have not yet recorded a string quartet by Haydn. Indeed their only previous LP record issued in this country seems to have been Mozart's K.387 in G. Their playing of K.458 is in many ways attractive, though I was a little worried by the leader's habit of making little bulges in the middle of notes in *cantabile* passages. Also he gives the impression of wanting to hustle the finale on a little faster than the other three wish to take it. Though this is not an ideal performance, it is, I think, the best at present available, and there is much to enjoy. Furthermore the music is extremely well recorded, with enough resonance to make the sound glow, but not so much as to make it unrealistic.

As regards the F major, Mozart's last quartet, the Quatuor Haydn give a performance somewhat akin to that of the Italian Quartet; both seem attractive enough until you put on the Amadeus

version, and then all the bits that you thought showed Mozart a little off colour glow with life. The Amadeus is the only quartet of the three that seems to "feel" the slow movement, and the only one that makes the finale really exciting. The Quatuor Haydn make little of the end of this movement, apparently not realising that it is meant to be soft. And why, in the finale of the B flat quartet, do they play the two bars before the first double bar soft when Mozart marked them *forte*? But in the F major, as in the B flat, the Quatuor Haydn are decidedly better recorded than the Amadeus, who have been given too much resonance for my taste, and the instruments are better balanced. All four players have plenty of technique and excellent ensemble. R.F.

**MOZART. String Quartet No. 20 in D major, K.499. String Quartet No. 21 in D major, K.575. Barchet Quartet. Vox PL8730 (12 in., 39s. 74d.).**

|                 |  |                    |
|-----------------|--|--------------------|
| Quartet No. 20: |  | (2/56) ABL3080     |
| Netherlands Qt. |  |                    |
| Quartet No. 21: |  | (11/55) (H)ALP1288 |
| Amadeus Qt.     |  |                    |

The Barchet Quartet seem to me to have improved in the last few years, and their playing on this disc is good. In K.499 they are at least the equal of the Netherlands Quartet, but in K.575 they have more formidable rivals, and I am inclined to prefer the Amadeus performance. For one thing the Amadeus seem to me to choose better tempos for the two middle movements; in both cases they are faster than the Barchet Quartet. I would have liked a more prominent placing for the 'cello, which has a great many solos in this quartet but always sounds much further away than the first violin; this applies equally to both recordings. (Perhaps in Mozart's last three quartets, with their numerous 'cello solos, the 'cello should be placed in front opposite the first violin.) But a more important acoustical point arises out of these discs: except for the Amadeus, there is far too much resonance. Gramophone companies these days delight in adding artificial resonance, and if this is done well it certainly gives the music a glow, a mellowness, that makes listening pleasurable. But it is terribly easy to overdo it, and it is certainly overdone on both the Netherlands Quartet disc of K.499 and to a slightly lesser extent on the Barchet. Real live string quartets just don't sound like this. The quality is especially unrealistic in some of the *piano* passages, for instance bar 17 of the minuet of K.499 in the Barchet version. There happen to be several silent bars in this work, but they are not at all silent on this record; the sound carries over from the bar before. It is a vexed question whether chamber music should be balanced as though it is played in the room with you or as though it is

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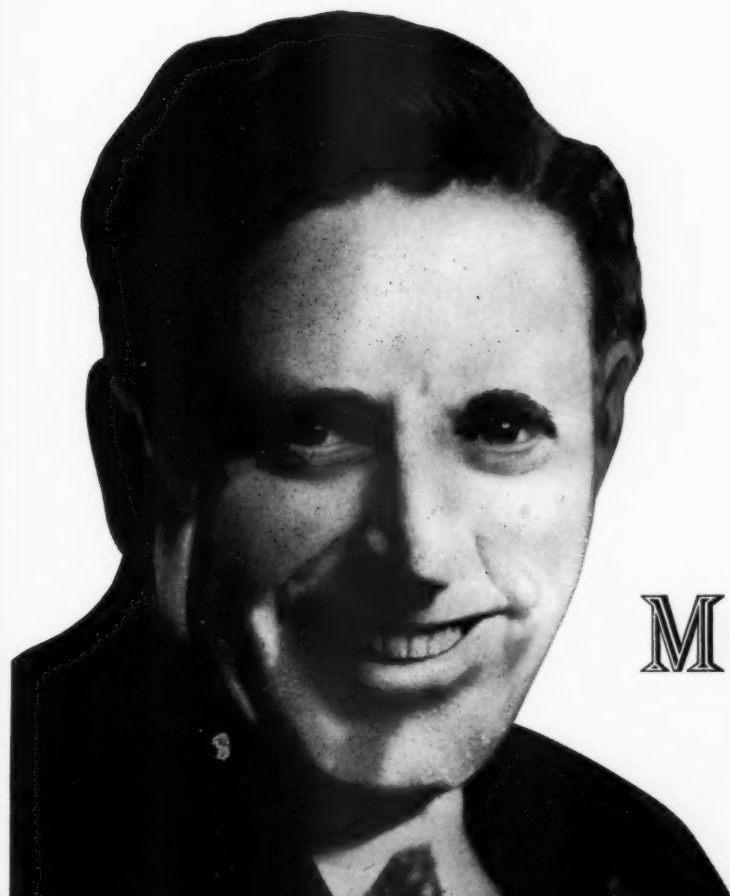
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played some distance away on a platform in a sizeable hall. In the first case scarcely any resonance is needed at all, and even in the latter there is never one half the resonance to be found on these two discs of K.499.

I would add that there are no scrolls between the movements on the new Barchet disc, though there seems to be room enough for them, and no repeats except in the minuets; that the players make an unaccountable pause between the minuet and its trio in K.499; and that their intonation, ensemble and style are admirable. R.F.

#### NEWSIDLER, H. *Eight Pieces for Lute*:

Preamble; Zart schöne fraw; Der Bethler Tantz; Elslein; Nach willen dein; Der Künigin Tantz; Wol kumpt der May; Wascha mesa.

**GARSI, S. *Lute Music*:** Aria del Gran Duca; Corenta; Balletto I/II/I; La Cesarine; Gagliarda Manfredina; Ballo del Serenissimo Duca di Parma; La Mutia; Le ne mento per la gola. **Walter Gerwig** (lute). D.G.G. Archive AP13031 (10 in., 29s. 6½d.).

There was once a time when the lute, as a domestic instrument, was as essential a piece of furniture as the piano has been during the last hundred years or so. This new addition to the Archive series shows some of the homely, though not invariably easy pieces composed for the lute by an early member of the German School and a late member of the Italian. Hans, somewhat more famous than his brother Melchior Newsidler, came from Bratislava. He settled in Nuremberg, where he published several outstanding books of lute music including an excellent method entitled *Ein neu geordnet künstlich Lautenbuch* (1536). The eight pieces recorded by Walter Gerwig offer a rapid but useful conspectus of the main forms and styles in Newsidler's time: preludes, dances, and arrangements of popular songs. Unlike some of his lutenist colleagues, Newsidler arranged songs in their entirety rather than remain content to reduce the lower voice-parts to manageable proportions and leave the uppermost line to be sung. He simplified the music a good deal, of course, since he was writing primarily for amateurs.

The *Preamble* which begins this selection is a good example of the florid sonority beloved of the German lutenists, then under the influence of organist-composers. Many of the dances have great charm: both *Der Bethler Tantz* and *Der Künigin Tantz* have plentiful rhythmic interest and appealing tunes. Sometimes the after-dance (*hupff auf*) cheerfully goes its own melodic way, not following slavishly, as was the normal custom, the outline of the main dance. *Wascha mesa*, based on one of the best-known vamping formulae, the passamezzo, is an example of this individuality. Especially effective are the rapid alternations of bass and treble chords, evoking some genial peasant strumming away at a village dance. The song transcriptions are for the most part expressive and lyrical rather than virtuosic-music; indeed Gerwig heightens this aspect by choosing not the versions with difficult little runs ("scharpfen laiffein"

as Newsidler called them) but the simpler ones. *Nach willen dein*, for example, is a song by Hofhaimer which Newsidler gives in an easy edition and in a more advanced style, and it is the former that Gerwig has recorded.

By the end of the 16th century the greatness of the Italian lutenists was declining fast. Francesco da Milano, Bianchini, Gorzanis and Caroso were already names of the past, and although the three sons of Piccinini were still active as composers of lute music beyond the turn of the century, there was far less publication of lute tablatures than formerly. The music of Santino Garsi, a native of Parma, remained in three manuscripts, two of which bear the dates 1590 and 1620. He was almost unknown until about thirty years ago when Helmut Osthoff published a monograph about his life and works. Again, there is much charm and rhythmic appeal in these dances (Garsi confined his works to this genre) but the vigour and inventiveness of the earlier composers is lacking.

Something of the gradual emergence of accompanied monody may be heard in the strong sweep of the *Aria del Gran Duca* and in the more delicate contours of *La Cesarine*. The *Corenta* and *Balletto* are, however, much less colourful than some of their predecessors, though the *Gagliarda Manfredina*, with its off-beat opening, holds the attention throughout. A strong hint of the Folia ground-bass is heard in the last two items, *La Mutia* and *Le ne mento per la gola*, the latter having some kinship with a dance known in England as *The French Galliard*.

Gerwig's playing is magnificent, and the recording has captured much of the essentially intimate quality of the lute whilst avoiding incidental noises and distractions. D.S.

#### SCHUBERT. *Trio in B flat major, Op. 99 (D.898). Trio Santoliquido.*

D.G.G. DGM18261 (12 in., 39s. 7½d.). Fournier, Janigro, Badura-Skoda

(10/54) WLP5188 (4/56) (H)BLP1077

This serene and beautiful performance solves the difficulty posed by having to make a choice between the two earlier versions—which came to a draw on points. Faced now with three Trios, a modern Paris need have little hesitation in awarding his prize to Ornella Puliti Santoliquido and her compatriots. Signora Santoliquido, known from her recordings with the Virtuosi di Roma and for her London concerts, is joined in her Trio by Arrigo Pelliccia, violin, and Massimo Amfitatrof, cello—also a Virtuosi di Roma soloist.

They play with the relaxed elegance such as we know from Boccherini or Chigi Quintet performances—the hall-mark, it seems, of the best Italian chamber music-making to-day. The tone of all three soloists is rounded, full and beautiful, the phrasing is shapely, and—an important point—the rhythmic sluggishness which is sometimes a concomitant of relaxation is never present. True, the Fournier/Janigro/Badura-Skoda ensemble give a more tingling sort of performance; but the Italians have an easy grace which strikes

one as authentically Schubertian—and none of the Quartetto Italiano's affectations. "One glance at Schubert's Trio," said Schumann, "and all the world is fresh and bright again". That is how I felt, listening to this idyllic music thus played and recorded. A.P.

**SCHUBERT. Sonatina No. 1 in D major, Op. 137, No. 1. Sonatina No. 2 in A minor, Op. 137, No. 2.** **Johanna Martzy** (violin), **Jean Antonietti** (piano). Columbia 33CX 1359 (12 in., 39s. 7½d.).

**SCHUBERT. Sonatina No. 3 in G minor, Op. 137, No. 3. Sonata in A major, Op. 162.** **Johanna Martzy** (violin), **Jean Antonietti** (piano). Columbia 33CX1399 (12 in., 39s. 7½d.).

*Sonata in A:*  
D. Oistrakh, Oborin (12/54) MWLS11

The Schubert Violin Sonatas are wholly delightful works that have unfortunately suffered from the extreme reasonableness of their technical demands on players; of inestimable utility as teaching pieces, the skilled soloist has been reluctant to repeat them in the concert room. But the domestic player or listener who has learnt to love the Mozart E minor Violin Sonata will find more resemblances in the Schubert D major Sonatina than a near-identity of opening phrase: these small-scale sonatas are among the most attractive—except to the virtuoso—in the repertory.

They are given ideal performances on these records. There is no exaggeration of effect: just straightforward playing of the first order, beautifully phrased, and beautifully balanced on all except a handful of occasions when perhaps the violin might have yielded even more to the piano. But it is only a marginal difficulty; and throughout the playing is invested with the highest standards of musicianship.

The same beauty of performance is extended to the A major Sonata; a slightly larger-scale work, somewhat more exacting in its demands. It boasts a wayward first movement, here rather waywardly played; a firmer grip (and agreement between the players on the matter of how to phrase some antiphonal triplet passages) might have given the music greater strength. But it is given greater strength by some editing of the last bar of all; this is an improvement on Schubert's oddly flat-footed ending.

A clear, intimate, and extremely well-toned recording is at its best in the D major Sonatina (which plays for some 14 minutes, and the G minor for a little over 18; could they not have been coupled on a ten-inch disc?). On the earlier Monarch record Oistrakh and Oborin play the A major Sonata beautifully, but with an approach oddly—and somewhat indefinitely—reminiscent of the concert hall. Oistrakh is presenting the music, Martzy enjoying it; and the enjoyment, I feel, is irresistibly communicated, helped by the greatly superior quality of Columbia's recording. Even without considering the beauty and lucidity of the Sonatinas, I would be in no doubt as to which version of the Sonata to choose. M.M.

## DANCES OF SHAKESPEARE'S TIME.

**Pavan** (Dowland, MB IX, 104); **Ricercar** (Simpson, MB IX, 106); **Alman** (Simpson, MB IX, 107); **Passamezzo Pavan** (Philips, MB IX, 90); **Pavan, "The Funerals"** (Holborne, MB IX, 66); **Galliard** (Holborne, MB IX, 67); **Alman, "The Honeysuckle"** (Holborne, MB IX, 68); **Coranto, "Hey Ho Holiday"** (Holborne, MB IX, 69); **Four-Note Pavan** (Farrant, MB IX, 62); **"The Temporiser"** (Johnson, MB IX, 31); **"The Witty Wanton"** (Johnson, MB IX, 32); **Ayre** (Adson, MB IX, 54); **Four-Note Pavan** (Ferrabosco, MB IX, 63); **Galliard, Alman, Coranto** (Brade, MB IX, 57-9). **Boyd Neel String Orchestra** directed from the harpsichord by **Thurston Dart**. London L'Oiseau-Lyre OL50127 (12 in., 39s. 74d.).

Rumour has it that the faces of the Boyd Neel Orchestra, when a radio announcer described this admirable group as a "broken consort", grew momentarily longer than their fiddles. They play here as a "whole consort", that is, a group of players using essentially the same family of instruments. The music is interesting not only as a collection of dances common in Shakespeare's time, but also as a supplement in sound to Volume IX of *Musica Britannica* and a testimony to the spirited contributions of expatriate Englishmen such as Dowland, who worked in Copenhagen; Simpson, who also settled there after a brief but successful career in Germany; Phillips, sometime organist to the Archduke Albert and composer to the court orchestra at Brussels; Adson, who served at the court of the Duke of Lorraine; and Brade, most-travelled of them all, who published dance music in Hamburg, Lübeck, Antwerp and Berlin from 1609 to 1621.

This music was not invariably meant to be played by as large a body of strings as the Boyd Neel Orchestra. On the other hand, it was sometimes played by a more varied and flexible body of musicians. Holborne's book of dances published in 1599 contained "Pavans, Galliards, Almains and other short Aeirs both grave and light, for viols, violins, or other musical Wind Instruments". Other printed sources give similar indications for performance, and grateful as we should be for the music here recorded, it is not unfair to say that the string tone does tend to pall after a time. Half-way through the second side I began to long for a change of tone-colour—even a recorder.

Those who know Dowland principally as a song writer will be thrilled by the magnificent Pavan (104) which was printed in Simpson's *Taffelconsort* in 1621, also the source of the next two pieces. These are both by Thomas Simpson himself and although the first (*Ricercar, Bonny sweet Robin*) is hardly a dance it was a good idea to squeeze it in on grounds of sheer quality. The texture of this extended setting of a well-known folk-song is not dissimilar to that of Dowland's Pavan, for both afford evidence of the increasing importance of

the two upper parts. The lower three, though decorative and contrapuntal, are definitely subservient, and if they were reduced to short score and played on a keyboard instrument the result (with the two violin parts above) would be almost indistinguishable from a trio-sonata.

One of the most typical stylistic features in this music is the constant interchange of material between the two violin parts, an effect that can properly be captured only by a stereo-tape. It is a sad but undeniable fact that antiphonal effects, whether instrumental or vocal, do not show up very well with present recording techniques. In Simpson's Alman (107), for instance, the top part as heard does not consist entirely of music played by the first violins. The firsts alternate with the seconds almost bar for bar, so that the first section of this dance might be expressed from a point of view of texture as I II I II I II, a genuine *trompe l'oreille* if ever there was one. I love the way Brade gets to the dominant of E major as early as the third bar of the second section. If his violinists really played that editorial chain of trills at the end they must have been adepts at shifting.

Philips left no detailed instruction as to which was the correct order of the sections of his fine Passamezzo Pavan (90): they occur in various orders in the manuscripts at Oxford and at New York. The *passamezzo antico* was a solemn dance: Marston, in his *Scurge of Villany*, says: "Ye gracious orbes keepe the old measuring, all's spoiled if once ye fall to capering". There is no capering in this performance, though the tempo is a shade on the fast side to my ears. When the six parts divide into higher and lower choirs of four parts each, the trumpet-like block chords are most telling and effective.

The first side ends with a charming suite of dances by Holborne (66-69). The expressive solemnity of the Pavan, subtitled "The Funerals" is entirely appropriate. Both Galliard and Alman are known in other arrangements, for the first is found as "Nowel's Galliard" in the Fitzwilliam Virginal Book, and the Alman occurs as a piece for cittern in Holborne's anthology for that instrument. There is an infectious change of rhythm (known as *hemiola*) in the final dance—Coranto "Heigh ho Holiday"—which shows that Holborne could be gay as well as serious.

Side two contains two "Four-note Pavans": one by Daniel Farrant and the other by Alfonso Ferrabosco II, both members of the royal band. In each pavan a four-note motive appears at different pitches and in different rhythms in the uppermost part. The other instruments are largely independent, and this naturally makes the upper part stand out almost like a vocal line. In Ferrabosco's Pavan words are actually set below the notes (Ben Jonson's "Hear me, O God"), but this performance is purely instrumental. Music of the lighter type is to be heard in the two masque dances by Johnson and the Ayre by Adson, this latter coming from the *Courtly Masquing Ayres* of 1621.

Last of all come excellent performances of Brade's Galliard, Alman, and Coranto

(57-59), from the *Neuwe ausserlesene Paduanen* of 1609 and *Neuwe lustige Vollen* of 1621. The Galliard, according to Sir John Davies (*Orchestra*, lxvii, 2) is "a swift and wandering dance . . . with passages uncertain". This gives us an idea of its general character and tempo, aptly stylized (as are the Alman and Coranto) in this recording. I am certain that a good deal of this music will win new friends for the Jacobean age. D.S.

**JACOBEOAN CONSORT MUSIC.** Suite (Coperario, MB IX, 98); **Miserere** (Anon. MB IX, 97); **Ayre** (Ward, MB IX, 6); **Fantasia** (Lupo, MB IX, 11); **Suite** (Coperario, MB IX, 102); **Suite** (Coperario, MB IX, 99); **Captain Hume's Calliard** (Hume, MB IX, 122); **Fantasia** (Coperario, MB IX, 8); **Captain Hume's Lamentations** (Hume, MB IX, 128); **Galliard** (Gibbons, MB IX, 17). **The Jacobean Ensemble** directed by **Thurston Dart**. London L'Oiseau-Lyre OL50133 (12 in., 39s. 74d.).

Not every connoisseur is able to indulge his taste in Jacobean furniture. Jacobean consort music is now, however, within the range of the more slender purse, for this disc (and its companion, reviewed earlier in this issue) draw upon some of the best music in the recently published ninth volume of *Musica Britannica*. This volume in turn presents the best of English consort music written during the reign of James I, and thanks to the devoted and herculean labours of William Coates, who transcribed well-nigh a thousand pieces of music from ninety manuscript and printed sources, the cream of this vast repertory is now available for a modest 75s. The score, used in conjunction with the discs, is of great help towards understanding a style that is not familiar to modern listeners, although it makes no great demands upon either the ear or the intellect. It is, in fact, far more restful than Stokowski's "restful music", and I can thoroughly recommend it.

Four out of the ten pieces are by Giovanni Coperario, an Englishman in disguise. John Cooper, a little piqued perhaps at the fulsome flattery accorded to visiting or resident Italian musicians such as Ferrabosco, Mico and Lupo, took himself off to Italy and changed his name as well as his habit. There is no proof that he studied in any particular town, but the frequent echoes of Monteverdian tunes and tricks suggest that it might have been Mantua, a city by no means unknown to Englishmen abroad. In his splendid facsimile edition of Coperario's *Rules How to Compose*, the late Manfred Bukofzer suggested that the composer was "a first-class second-rater". Typically, he carefully qualified this by saying that "this evaluation may have to be revised as reprints of his music become more plentiful". It certainly seems from the three Suites and the Fantasia recorded by the Jacobean Ensemble on this disc that Coperario is well into the alpha class.

The two Suites for violin and continuo are from a set of fourteen composed during the second decade of the 17th century. They all have the same pattern of movements: a Fantasy, lightly contrapuntal in

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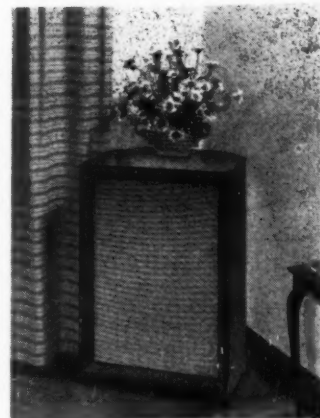
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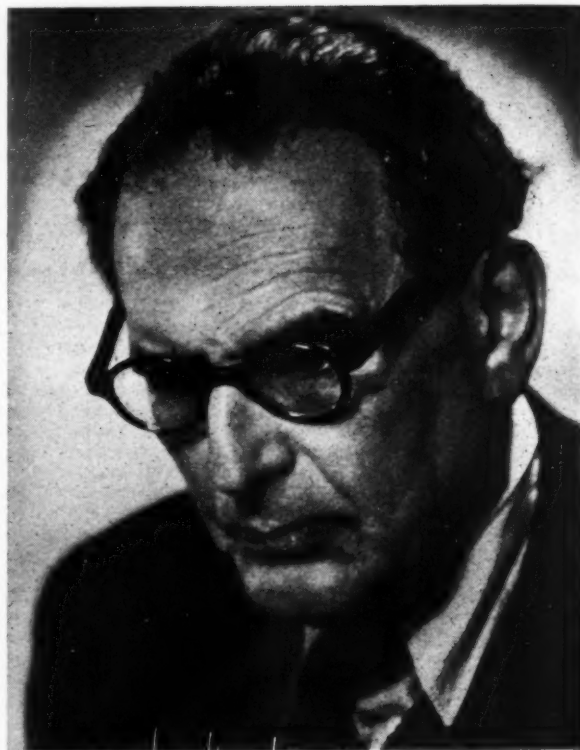
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style and full of inventive yet idiomatic figures for the violin, then an Alman (originally a dance-form but here as much of an abstract form as the minuet in a Haydn Symphony) and finally an Ayre or Galliard. Coperario's unique melodic gifts have a delightful habit of emerging when they are least expected: for example, even the opening Fantasy may suddenly branch off, as in 98, with an irrepressibly non-contrapuntal theme (1' 34") just touching a heavenly ninth chord (1' 42") on its way to the cadence. Neville Marriner manages effects such as these with an uncanny skill and an admirable sense of what good Jacobean taste might have been. He is joined in the Suite for two violins by Peter Gibbs, a refined and sensitive musician whose tone blends well with that of the consort. Notice the strong flavour of the ritornello from Monteverdi's *Chione d'or* 10" from the beginning of the Alman of 102.

Coperario's Fantasia (8) was published, like Lupo's (11) in the Dutch collection of 1648—*XX Koninklyke Fantasien*, and both are examples of the fantasy for viols which came to be more and more frequently arranged for the up-and-coming trio sonata texture. They are performed in this way by the Jacobean Ensemble. Two compositions by Hume are of more than usual interest, though they do not include that famous *col legno* effect in "Hark, hark", generally admitted to be the first appearance in print of a now common device. But the Galliard (122) and *Lamentations* (128) represent Hume in genial and melancholy mood. It seems hardly possible to believe that the latter piece, published in 1605, contains not in embryo but in fully-developed manner all those contrapuntal possibilities of an unaccompanied string instrument usually associated with J. J. Walther, Biber, and Bach. True, the *Lamentations* are accompanied, but only by a monodic line: the real polyphony lies below. Desmond Dupré is the persuasive gamba (lyra-viol) player in these items, and he is joined by Dennis Nesbitt in a beautiful Ayre by John Ward (6). Besides all these there is a *Miserere* with discreetly hidden cantus firmus (97) from that extremely rare book of c.1620—*Parthenia In-Violata*: and a pensive and wistful Galliard by Orlando Gibbons, apparently the only three-part Galliard known.

This is splendid music, for the most part very well played. The recording too is satisfactory, though the balance is not always perfect and there are one or two disturbing tape-joins. An abrupt beginning to the Lupo piece suggests that the tape was cut too far in. The bands as given on the labels do not unfortunately correspond to the scrolls on the disc, since the individual movements of the Coperario Suites are given separate bands. D.S.

**VIVALDI. Concerto in G minor (P.407). Georges Alès (violin). Concerto in B flat major (P.388). Georges Alès (violin), Roger Albin ('cello). Concerto in C minor (P. 434). Roger Albin ('cello). Concerto in G major (P.135). Georges Alès (violin), Robert Gendré (violin), Roger Albin ('cello), André Remond ('cello), all with Ensemble Orchestral de L'Oiseau-Lyre conducted by Louis de Froment. London L'Oiseau-Lyre OL50124 (12 in., 39s. 7½d.).**

This record brings three additions to the Vivaldi discography. Only the G minor Concerto, P.407, has been done before, by the Virtuosi di Roma in their Brunswick collection AXTL1020. The novelties don't fall behind Vivaldi's usual high level but don't, on the other hand, stand out as being exceptionally fine or inventive examples of his art—except for one movement, the Andante of the B flat Concerto, which is a serene canonic exchange between solo violin and solo 'cello.

The principal soloists are by now familiar names; the total effect is clean and well-balanced, without having that star quality which marks the Roman Virtuosi's offerings; quick movements are apt to chug along. Georges Alès's thin, keen tone grows rather monotonous in this recording—but that is perhaps partly the fault of the listener who plays through the disc at a go, instead of one concerto at a time. A.P.

## INSTRUMENTAL

**BACH. Prelude and Fugue in E minor, BWV548. Prelude and Fugue in A minor, BWV551. Recorded on the Schnitger organ at Cappel. Prelude and Fugue in C major, BWV547. Toccata and Fugue in D minor, BWV565. Recorded on the organ of St. Jakobi, Lübeck. Helmut Walcha (organ). D.G.G. Archive APM14509 (12 in., 39s. 7½d.).**

I always enjoy Walcha's playing of Bach. Occasionally he irritates with a bizarre approach to well-loved music, but he is never boring, and usually he captivates completely with his skilful playing and baroque registration. Of the two Bach-period organs represented on this disc I am inclined to prefer the St. Jakobi instrument at Lübeck. The sound of the full organ of the Schnitger palls, on my ears at least, some time before the end of the E minor prelude, and the "Wedge" fugue that follows it is also a shade disappointing. The Schnitger is much more attractive when a greater variety of registration is called for, and the little A minor prelude and fugue, a very early work in the Buxtehude vein (Novello Book X) is entrancing; I had not thought it could sound so appealing. But personally I should play the St. Jakobi side more often. The "great" C major (Novello Book IX) sounds splendid. Walcha starts the fugue, with its tiny one-bar subject, very quietly, and the delayed climax is wonderful. On the other hand, he starts the fugue of the famous D minor toccata on full

organ, and takes it at a brisk tempo which makes it sound what it was meant to be—a virtuoso piece. Richter, on a recent recording made in the Victoria Hall, Geneva, was altogether too careful in his tempo. The arpeggio episode without pedals in the middle of the fugue makes the most delicious sound, and altogether Walcha gives a magnificent performance of this wonderful music. I would only criticise what sounds like an undue reduction in dynamic range; there appears to be a cut-back on loud passages, which makes the quieter ones sound closer to the microphone. I feel, too, that if D.G.G. are going to print a descriptive card in English to go with their Bach organ records, they should identify each piece according to the Novello edition as well as the Peters; after all, most English organists use the former, and it is parochial of them to give only the latter. But I would not end this account on a critical note; rather I would commend to you the translucent clarity of the part-writing on eighteenth-century organs, Walcha's complete command of organ technique and the eighteenth-century style, and finally the realistic quality of the sound. R.F.

**BEETHOVEN. Sonata No. 17 in D minor, Op. 31, No. 2. Sonata No. 18 in E flat major, Op. 31, No. 3. Solomon (piano). H.M.V. ALP1303 (12 in., 39s. 7½d.).**

Sonata No. 17: Backhaus (1/55) LXT2747  
Novas (10/54) PL6270  
Matthews (6/56) 33SX1047  
Sonata No. 18: Backhaus (12/54) LXT2950

This is one of those fortunate Beethoven sonata records, inevitably becoming rarer, where each side offers an evident first choice for its particular work. Solomon gives wonderfully well-planned performances; the rhythmic control is finely subtle. Tempos are carefully chosen so that their interrelation within each work shall be satisfying. The balance of parts is ideal. The palette of tone-colours is sober; but then Solomon's Beethoven performances have always been marked by finesse of rhythms and phrasing and by careful dynamic grading, rather than by a wide range of coloration.

The E flat Sonata is particularly successful. The first movement—until the rest has been heard—may perhaps be thought a shade slow, not ebullient or sparkly enough; but a bewitching performance of the Scherzo, at a very lithe gait, gives retrospective point to the earlier speed. In this Scherzo the contrasts, the changes of motion and of texture, are so finely accomplished that one feels impelled to go back and play the movement over again—because of the sheer pleasure it gives. The Minuet is very regular and steady, with the melody accorded less prominence over the other parts than is usual.

As one would expect, Solomon holds together the sections of the first movement in the "Tempest" Sonata, Op. 31, No. 2, in masterly fashion. The "speaking" recitative is not given out in a single pedal (possible on a Beethoven piano, though



scarcely on a modern one), but the phrase is mysteriously hazed over; it sounds as if the aura come from a left-hand chord silently depressed and held down through a series of "half-pedals". In the finale Solomon makes pretty play with the rhythmic ambiguities of the triplets, casting a rippled fascination over the movement. The recording is perfect. A.P.

**BEETHOVEN. Sonata No. 21 in C major, Op. 53, "Waldstein". Sonata No. 30 in E major, Op. 109. Lili Kraus (piano).** London Ducretet-Thomson DTL93108 (12 in., 39s. 7½d.).

*Sonata No. 21:*  
Backhaus (6/51) LXT2532  
Gieseking (10/53) 33CX1055  
Matthews (5/54) 33SX1021  
Gorodnitzki (2/55) CTL7067  
Frugoni (8/55) PL8650  
Solomon (4/56) (H)ALP1160  
Malinin (see below)  
*Sonata No. 30:*  
Backhaus (2/51) LXT2535  
Solomon (3/54) (H)ALP1062  
Hess (11/54) (H)ALP1109  
Gieseking (see below)

Lili Kraus's "Waldstein" is at another pole from Malinin's. She plunges into it with an approach more "masculine" than most male pianists would dare. I'm afraid the word for some of it is "bang", though part of the blame must lie with the dry, flat-timbred recording. The first movement is resolute and determined, jerky and sudden. I very much admire her free cadenza-like handling of the penultimate page. In the Adagio the low C (bar 9) which opens the melody for some reason thunders out. It is rough seas when the left-hand scales run up for the crescendo in the Finale. In the subsequent triplets the melody is shown (rightly) to lie on the second semiquaver of each group, but so emphatically is this done that the triplet effect is lost. It is a performance filled with temperament, but fiercely executed.

The coupling, Op. 109, is discussed in the review below. A.P.

**BEETHOVEN. Sonata No. 21 in C major, Op. 53, "Waldstein". PROKOFIEV. Sonata No. 4 in C minor, Op. 29. Sarcasm, Op. 17, No. 3. S Scriabin. Two Poems, Op. 32. Eugene Malinin (piano).** Columbia 33CX1343 (12 in., 39s. 7½d.).

*Sonata No. 21:*  
See above  
*Sonata No. 4:*  
Cormman (12/53) LXT2836

Last month there came, also from Columbia, a coupling of some Shostakovich Preludes and Fugues with Chopin's "Funeral March" Sonata; here we have Prokofiev and Scriabin backed by Beethoven. I don't think either of them a good example of programme-building for LP. In a Wigmore Hall recital one would like to hear these Russian pianists (Gilels plays the other disc referred to) in classical as well as compatriot works; but on disc the combination is apt to prove expensive—unless both performances are of such quality that one must have them.

Prokofiev's Fourth Piano Sonata, published in 1917, but based on sketches from earlier notebooks, does not hang together very well, as L.S. noted when reviewing the Cormman version. Malinin's playing has more character than Robert Cormman's,

and he has a better recording to help him. Although he manages to perfection the quasi-improvisatory, gently melancholy style of the first two movements, only enthusiasts for early Prokofiev will be gripped by the music. Later, he was more inventive, and I hope that some company will issue soon his Ninth Piano Sonata, recently published by Boosey & Hawkes—played preferably by Svetoslav Rikhter, to whom it is dedicated. The "fillers" on the new disc are also well played. *Sarcasm* was perhaps chosen because of the resemblance of its opening to that of the "Waldstein".

Contemporary Russian pianists, like the Bolshoi dancers at Covent Garden, seem to place more value on restraint than on flamboyance: sometimes indeed they make us seem like flashy vulgarians. Malinin is certainly a very un-showy pianist, who never parades his immaculate technique. He opens the "Waldstein" with a very, very steady beat, and throughout gives a controlled, well-balanced and carefully graded performance.

It is clean, tasteful and scrupulous in its observance of the composer's markings. The only thing wrong with it is that it is rather dull. Everything is here, and in place: the trills, the glissando octaves of the finale, the runs. It is nicely recorded, but too cool and correct, too *non-committal*, if you like, to be interesting. A.P.

**BEETHOVEN. Sonata No. 30 in E major, Op. 109. Sonata No. 31 in A flat major, Op. 110. Walter Gieseking (piano).** Columbia 33CX 1374 (12 in., 39s. 7½d.).

*Coupled as above:*  
Hess (11/54) (H)ALP1160  
*Sonata No. 30:*  
See above  
*Sonata No. 31:*  
Backhaus (10/54) LXT2939  
Kempff (9/56) DGM18045

Today, Gieseking is playing Beethoven's sonatas in a style different from that of his pre-war performances. It is as if he had returned to Beethoven's music in the light of having played nothing but Mozart, Ravel and Debussy for a while. He plays with a crystalline purity of sound. He draws on a very wide palette of exquisite tone-colours. All the sounds he makes are beautiful, and all the textures are impeccably clear. When, after hearing the Gieseking performances of Opp. 109 or 110, one turns to any other version, the first impression is of colours put on more thickly and less delicately. The contrast is so great.

These qualities, it is true, were also present in the earlier Gieseking recordings of the sonatas; but they have been refined and developed until they permeate the entire conception of the works. The process may be traced by listening to the early 78s, then the LPs of a few years ago, and then to this latest issue.

But the concern is not simply with sound. Gieseking plays with great concentration and intensity, focusing on the expressive meaning of the music, and putting the witchery of his playing at the service of the interpretation. Other approaches are possible and it would be ridiculous to treat the various great pianists who have recorded these two sonatas as if they were entrants

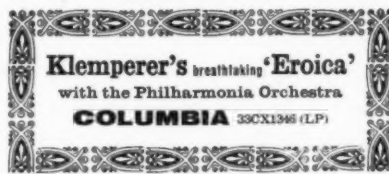
in a competitive festival. Where comparisons are made below, they are for the sake of description and definition.

Those who insist on absolute steadiness of rhythm may not endorse the very high opinion others will set on this account of the first movement of the A flat Sonata. In particular, the broken series of rising scales after the left-hand trills are treated very freely. Kempff gives us the more conventional reading of this movement, rather faster (more like Schnabel's tempo), and with the demisemiquavers hazed into a generalised sound; Gieseking's treatment of them is pointillist, with a kind of half-staccato and very, very light pedalling. Backhaus's reading, I now feel, was perhaps over-praised when it first appeared. His rhythmic handling is often cavalier, and at the demisemiquavers he rushes off in a much faster tempo.

In the Scherzo, Kempff is slow and heavy, as R.F. remarked when reviewing the D.G.G. disc. Gieseking is light, delicate and fanciful, Backhaus perhaps rather more "Beethovenish". The recitative and arioso Gieseking plays with surpassing beauty; his utterance of the notes attains to speaking eloquence. The fugue is enunciated with lovely, clear, firm tone, taking on a warmer glow as the bass octaves enter. In bar 11 of the arioso between the two fugues, the second of the repeated notes is touched with a delicacy that recalls Gieseking's performance of *Le Gibet* (in *Gaspard*); and the repeated chords which herald the inversion of the fugue are thrilling.

The recording of this performance of Op. 110 is impeccable. That of the E major Sonata has about three short passages which are not quite so good, though the greater part of the side is on the same level. Again, Gieseking draws on a wide palette of beautiful, limpid colours, playing the first movement with sustained concentration, and the Prestissimo with athletic grace. In the first variation of the finale he hurries a little in the last two bars before the repeat, which some may think a fault; but this is the sort of performance which inhibits any tendency to go fault-finding.

Opus 109 lasts about 17 minutes; perhaps it would be greedy to think this rather short measure for a 12 inch LP side—though it would be easy to give us, say, some Bagatelles as well. At any rate all the companies have so far agreed on its format. Lili Kraus (see the Ducretet-Thomson coupling of the "Waldstein" and Op. 109 listed above) gives a decisive, powerful and very active reading of the sonata, well recorded in the middle and bass regions, but not clean in the treble. The high notes in the last variation, which should float out above the trills, are hard and flat in timbre. The Andante follows on the Prestissimo with too little pause. After Gieseking, this



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performance inevitably seems lacking in imagination and subtlety, though it is far from negligible.

The virtues of Solomon's concentrated performance of Op. 109, and of Dame Myra Hess's thoughtful and generous readings of Opp. 109 and 110 (the same coupling as the new Gieseking) have been described before. Both pianists tend to draw tone of only one colour from the instrument, but within these limits give very fine and well-conceived interpretations. A.P.

**BRAHMS. Variations and Fugue on a Theme by Handel, Op. 24. Intermezzo in E flat minor, Op. 118, No. 6. Rhapsody in G minor, Op. 79, No. 2. Malcuzynski (piano).** Columbia 33CX1382 (12 in., 39s. 7½d.).

Variations and Fugue:

Katchen (7/52) LX3078  
Gordnitzki (10/54) CTL7049  
Moiseiwitsch (12/54) (H)CLP1017

Malcuzynski sees the Handel Variations in a bright steady light and lays them out before us with clean strong technique and a minimum of bother. For someone who insists on excellent recording, this is the version to have. But in Julius Katchen's performance the interpretative temperature is much higher: variation for variation, he discovers a richness of musical meaning that is not apparent in the Polish pianist's account. A new transfer of the Decca recording has improved the sound somewhat, but cannot disguise the fact that the recording is rather thick in tone; nor, on the other hand, can it disguise the fact that this is a magnificent performance, filled with imaginative insight and realised with the greatest pianistic subtlety.

Being a ten-inch gives the Decca another advantage over the newcomer. The Columbia disc turns over for the Fugue. The E flat minor Intermezzo is played in a more impressionistic way than Opus 24, but all the same does not go very deep into the music. In the G minor Rhapsody the pauses, the stoppings and startings, must be judged with the utmost finesse. Malcuzynski I would submit, stops just a little too long, so that the impassioned forward urge of the melody loses impetus. This is playing by a serious artist who has considered well his readings, but it cannot quite rival the interpretations that some of his colleagues have put on disc. A.P.

**BRAHMS. Klavierstücke, Op. 76. Fantasiestücke, Op. 116. Daniel Wayenberg (piano).** London Ducretet-Thomson DTL93059 (12 in., 39s. 7½d.).

Coupled as above:

Gieseking (6/55) 33CX1255  
Klaviertstücke, Op. 76: (5/54) LXT2914  
Fantasiestücke, Op. 116: (12/54) LXT2935  
Kempff

Mr. Wayenberg is ill-served by his recording. It is like listening to a piano in the next room, and when one brings up the tone to make it as bright as possible, it puts a rather raw edge on the sound. For this reason I would hesitate to offer more than a tentative judgment about the playing, so far as a general impression of slight dullness is concerned. Phrasing,

however, is not affected by the recording, and there can be no doubt that Mr. Wayenberg plays Op. 76, No. 2, the B minor capriccio, for example, in so regular a way as to make the piece sound just a little silly; he does not mould each phrase into a shapely span, as Gieseking and Kempff, and for that matter almost all pianists, do. But when, in his thoughtful performance of the next piece, the G minor Intermezzo, one asks for a warmer tone, then it may be only the recording which is at fault.

Generally the interpretations err on the side of plainness. In the A minor Intermezzo, Op. 76, No. 7, Mr. Wayenberg takes his cue too literally from the indication, *moderato semplice*, and plays demurely. Compare either of his older colleagues; and note especially how Kempff (without losing the requisite simplicity) warms and colours the phrases, so that the piece sounds like a quiet utterance, not just a succession of notes. The F sharp minor Capriccio, Op. 76, No. 1, is extensively marked with *p* and *f* and a variety of *crescendos* and *diminuendos*. Mr. Wayenberg leaves it all on one dynamic plane, and so the result is tame.

Kempff's and Gieseking's interpretations have been written about extensively in these pages. One does not wish to be discouraging about a young pianist whose concerts have always proved well worth going to; but in this corner of the recorded field he finds himself outclassed.

A.P.

**CHOPIN. Sonata No. 2 in B flat minor, Op. 35. Sonata No. 3 in B minor, Op. 58. Alexander Brailowsky (piano).** H.M.V. ALP1401 (12 in., 39s. 7½d.).

Coupled as above:

Novas (7/53) PL7300  
Schioler (6/55) (H)ALP1243  
Katchen (8/56) LXT5093  
Sonata No. 2:  
Backhaus (2/51) LXT2535  
Horowitz (11/53) (H)ALP1087  
Gilels (9/56) 33CX1364  
Sonata No. 3:  
Malcuzynski (12/52) 33CX1005  
Magaloff (7/55) LXT5037  
Lipatti (5/56) 33CX1337

There is some attractive playing on this disc, and the piano tone is well caught by the engineers, but I would not put it in the same class as those made by Katchen, Gilels, Magaloff or Lipatti. Brailowsky has wonderful technique, but insists on over-taxing it. For instance he plays the finale of the B minor sonata faster than anyone else on the list above, indeed faster than it is possible to play it; not all the notes are there and most of it sounds a scramble. In any case the music is not better the faster it is. At a more reasonable tempo Katchen manages to infuse some poetry into it and play all the notes too. The finale of the B flat minor is also too fast, and the playing too uneven. Yet the two scherzos go well, especially the B minor. In the slower music Brailowsky gives good performances of an "expressive" type, with arty little hesitations here and there in the more lyrical bits. His "Funeral March" of its kind is excellent.

R.F.

**CHOPIN. Mazurkas, Nos. 1-51. Artur Rubinstein (piano).** H.M.V. ALP 1398-1400 (three 12 in., 118s. 10½d.).

This very important issue comes to close a gap in the recorded repertory which did not exist in 78 r.p.m. days. Then, we had a superlative set of the fifty-one Mazurkas which constitute the accepted canon, on 28 sides, played by Rubinstein. And now we have Rubinstein's LP set. As before, his account of these works can be hailed as "a miracle of artistry". They are laid out as follows:

ALP1398: Opp. 6, 7, 17 and 24.

ALP1399: Opp. 30, 33, 41 and 50.

ALP1440: Opp. 56, 59, 63, 67, 68 and the two posthumous ones in A minor.

Of all the groups in Chopin's oeuvre, the Mazurkas are perhaps the most rewarding. As Mr. Sackville-West has written: "despite their frivolous-sounding title, they contain some of the most profoundly beautiful and imaginative music Chopin ever wrote. To this innocent dance form he confided, as to a diary, his harmonic and contrapuntal experiments, his subtlest rhythmic inventions, as well as his most intimate movements of hope, sadness, gaiety and despair".

As a group, they are more daring and impetuous, and more varied, than any other. They grow rich and stranger and more beautiful as they proceed, and anyone wanting to obtain the set a record at a time would do well to start with the last disc, ALP1440. Op. 67, Nos. 1 and 3 are earlier works than their (posthumous) opus number would imply, while the first three of Op. 68 are earlier still—the first of all to be composed. Op. 68, No. 4 in F minor, on the other hand, is Chopin's very last composition. Despite the presence of these earlier works, the last record would be my first choice, because the Mazurkas of Opp. 56, 59 and 63 are all of surpassing beauty.

The recording is not absolutely first-rate; but then Rubinstein never seems to be given a piano recording of the highest quality. Nevertheless it can be affirmed that the ear soon "tunes in" to the (by highest standards) rather dry and shallow tone. One learns to make the necessary adjustments, especially if one has ever heard Rubinstein in the flesh. Once I had properly embarked on the set, it was only by a conscious effort that I could bring myself to pay keen critical attention to the quality of the recording. The music and the playing of it cast such a spell that one becomes absorbed in them. Just occasionally one is pulled up, as by the sound of the loud exposed A flats which open Op. 30, No. 3.

Rubinstein manages to perfection the rhythmic subtleties, the little hesitations and lingerings, which must never be overdone but which are the heart-beat of all great Chopin playing. Berlioz called them "divine coquetties"; Liszt, or whoever wrote his *Life of Chopin*, described the *tempo rubato* of the composer's own playing as "a movement flexible while it was abrupt and languishing, and as vacillating as the flame under the fluctuating breath which agitates it". This is what we

find in Rubinstein. And in the face of this performance, I feel it presumptuous to vouchsafe opinions such as that Op. 7, No. 2 in A minor, might ideally be a little more flowing—though the handling of the middle section is full of animation and variety, and the triplet figures most subtly varied in their delivery. It may just be the music which fosters an impression that the playing grows more thoughtful, more poetic and more concentrated from Op. 17 onwards. In Op. 7, No. 4 in G major, the triplets, certainly, are not articulated very distinctly—as if long familiarity with the piece had slightly blurred the sharpness of impression.

It would hardly be practicable to embark on a description of each mazurka but, everyone who buys these records will be able to make his own catalogue of the particular delights that he will find in them.

A.P.

### GRANADOS. Twelve Spanish Dances.

Gonzalo Soriano (piano). London Ducretet-Thomson DTL93101 (12 in., 39s. 7½d.).

de Larrocha (8/55) WLP5181

Written over a long period of time, Granados's Spanish Dances range through the full field of Spanish regional music. Villa-Lobos, in his Nonet, aimed to provide "A Rapid Impression of all Brazil", Granados does something of the same sort for Spain. The Dances make fascinating listening, animated and various, some better than others, though none of them dull. The earlier Westminster set was rather two-dimensional. Gonzalo Soriano, known to LP for his *Nights in the Gardens of Spain*, plays with a much greater sense of rhythmic finesse, daring freedoms not essayed by José Echaniz in his more straightforward reading, and investing the music with irresistible liveliness and colour. Fortunately, he gets a very good recording that reproduces faithfully the subtlety of his tonal shadings. Highly commended.

A.P.

### MOUSSORGSKY. Pictures at an Exhibition.

STRAVINSKY. *Petrushka Suite*.  
BALAKIREV. *Islamey, Fantaisie Orientale*. Alfred Brendel (piano). Vox PL9140 (12 in., 39s. 7½d.).

Pictures from an Exhibition:

Katchen (2/52) LK4046  
Pennario (2/55) CCL7525  
Malinin (5/56) 33C1045

Islamey:

Katchen (5/55) LW5160

There is some phenomenal piano-playing on this record; there seems to be no limit to Brendel's keyboard facility. His facility is frequently used, too, to give a most expressive shape to the music. But such a skill brings its own temptations in its train; and the Moussorgsky *Pictures* are, I think, in general too hurried. Some of the quicker numbers are electrifying; but some of the slower lack repose. In particular, the *Promenades* between the pictures are aggressive—even if allowed by the management to circulate in this noisy fashion a viewer would surely stand no chance of his eye

being caught by any picture at all; he goes round as if in a party with a guide who is late for his tea. *Nel modo russo*, Moussorgsky wrote over the first *Promenade*; adding, knowing his countrymen, *senza allegrezza*. Brendel's *allegrezza* is formidable, and not so easily to be dispensed with. But it does illuminate many indeed of the pictures, and it does have the very real virtue of allowing the work to be, for the first time, complete on one record side (it used regularly to be eight sides; once it was nine).

A listener prepared still to accept a two-sided version will, I think, find greater overall satisfaction in Malinin's ten-inch Columbia, a very good recording of an excellent performance, less hurried than Brendel's; for the recording of the new Vox does leave something to be desired. It is resonant enough, but there is a fair degree of clang to the tone. Patient manipulation of a flexible reproducer's controls may allow a distinct moderation of this clang, and then Brendel's brilliant playing clearly becomes much more enjoyable. One secret of the record I can get no setting of the controls to reveal with certainty: is the curious—and effective—terraced *diminuendo* at the end of *Catacombs* an unusual purely pianistic effect, or is it electrically assisted?

Similar fair standards of recording apply on the reverse of the disc; so do similar astonishing standards of agility in the piano-playing. *Petrushka* started life not as a ballet, but as a *Burlesque* for solo piano and orchestra. When Stravinsky abandoned that scheme, it left its mark for posterity in the ballet's scoring, which suddenly arouses the unsuspecting pianist of the theatre orchestra to a frenzy of activity when the music reaches the point of the original concert sketches. The scheme left a further mark ten years later, in 1921, when Stravinsky followed its original outline in arranging three scenes from *Petrushka* for Artur Schnabel as a piano solo. In this version—the one now recorded—here and there the effect of a passage necessarily compares only feebly with that of the orchestral version; but equally there are many passages where, played with enough *panache*, the cascades of the solo piano are extremely effective in their own right. Brendel most certainly does play them with enough *panache*, and all the brilliance of his playing is fully attuned to the scintillating music.

So it is to *Islamey*, another virtuoso piece of the first order. Again, as in the Moussorgsky, some room for reservation about the slower music, in this case the middle section; but little room for any reservation about the fireworks, which go off wholly without inhibition. They make Katchen's version seem laboured by comparison, in spite of a better recording.

Brendel's extraordinary facility is the focal point of this record. That, and a corollary: I am sure there must be more notes on it (right ones, too) than on any other single record of piano music in existence.

M.M.

MOZART. Piano Sonatas: No. 5 in G major, K.283; No. 11 in A major K.331; No. 15 in C major, K.545. Rondo in A minor, K.511. Guiomar Novaes (piano). Vox PL9080 (12 in., 39s. 7½d.).

Guiomar Novaes is a Brazilian pianist; in her youth she played to Fauré, Debussy and Moszkowski, by whom she was much praised. Most of her records have been of Chopin's music, and these for the most part have been well received in these columns. She is, I think rather less at home in Mozart. Indeed she makes the wonderful A minor rondo sound almost more like Chopin than Mozart, and some of her "expressive" touches are not in keeping with eighteenth-century style. In the G major she is not quite cool enough and not quite tidy enough, and on a number of occasions a note which should sound somehow doesn't. In the little C major, the sonata Mozart wrote for beginners (what beginner these days could tackle it?) she is a shade too slow in the *andante*, a dull piece made duller by all the repeats, and decidedly too fast in the finale which is *allegretto*, not *allegro*. Much the best playing comes in the A major, the sonata that starts with variations and ends with the famous *Alla Turca*. This is played with artistry and a sense of style. Miss Novaes never sounds other than a good pianist, but on this disc she is apt to sound like a good pianist off her chosen ground. The quality of the piano reproduction is a little lacking in roundness.

R.F.

MOZART. Piano Sonata in C minor, K.457. Rondo in A minor, K.511. Fantasia in C minor, K.475. Carl Seemann (piano). D.G.G. DGM18251 (12 in., 39s. 7½d.).

Coupled as above:

Backhaus  
K.457 & 475:  
Gieseking

(8/56) LXT5167

(3/55) 33CX1220

In the A minor Rondo we hear tame and tepid playing which seems to me (and to Schnabel) to be based on a misconception of Mozart style. This careful, tasteful enunciation of the phrases sparks no musical meaning out of the piece. Put on Backhaus's record, and the composition comes to life.

Backhaus offers us not only the Rondo, Fantasia and C minor Sonata, but the delightful C major Sonata, K.330, as well. Seemann gives a thoughtful, sustained account of the Fantasia, not very dramatic. His reading of the Sonata is scrupulously tidy, and dull. The recording, however, is excellent.

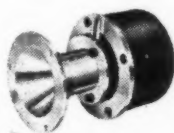
A.P.

### Children's Records

To date no determined efforts have been made in this country to attract the really young record enthusiast. In America this aspect of the business has been thoroughly exploited and no doubt with the benefit of that knowledge Capitol have announced the inauguration of a new series of "Junior Records". Issues will be made at 78 r.p.m. only and will feature artists such as Hopalong Cassidy, Mel Blanc, Eddie Cantor, Don Wilson and many more. The records will be priced at 5s. 3d. (including P.T.)



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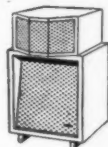


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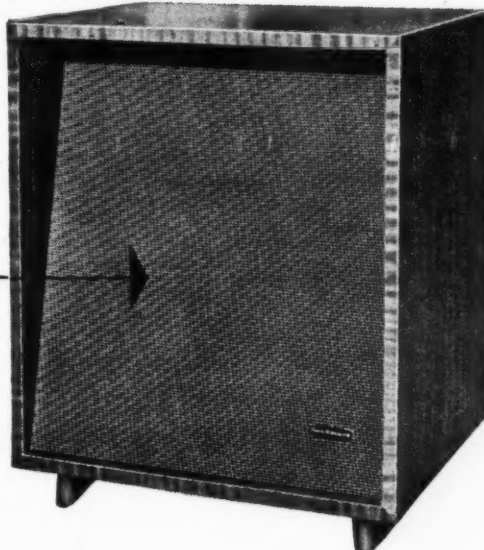
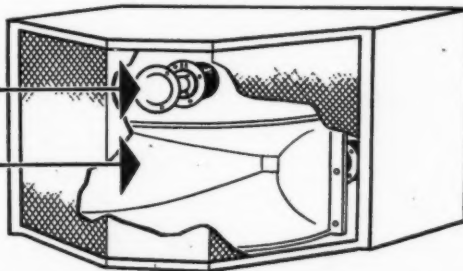
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**VIOLIN RECITAL. Sonata for Violin and Piano** (Ravel). **Praeludium and Allegro** (Pugnani - Kreisler). **Tzigane** (Ravel). **Pièce en forme de Habanera** (Ravel). **Tango in D major, Op. 165, No. 2** (Albéniz, arr. Kreisler). **Danza No. 1** from "La Vida Breve" (Falla, arr. Kreisler). **Devý Erlih** (violin), **Maurice Bureau** (piano). London Ducretet-Thomson DTL93106 (12 in., 39s. 7½d.).

Ravel's Violin Sonata of 1927 has been previously recorded, but never released, I think, in any of the English lists. It is not one of his most popular works, but it does boast a promising first movement: a cool *Allegretto* in which a shapely violin line is set off against bare piano harmonies. The second has acquired fame, rather than affection, with its title of *Blues*; but it consists of the formulas without the spirit. The banjo-like *pizzicati*, the syncopated rhythms, the violin's *glissandi*: the art of Bessie Smith will be recognised in these as dimly as will that of Palestrina in Second Species counterpoint. Relief may, however, be found in the third movement, a *Perpetuum Mobile* concerned to exercise severely the violinist, and belie a promise Ravel gave to avoid great technical difficulty.

The uneven work is, however, played with tremendous spirit by Devý Erlih and Maurice Bureau. There is clarity in the first movement, where Erlih displays at appropriate moments a willingness to accompany the piano which must surely stand him in good stead in the classics; there is the faintest of hints of a blues style, without caricature, in the slow movement; and there is a massive display of technical competence in the finale—as there is, too, in Erlih's long-sustained high G concluding the first movement.

The Sonata could not conceivably expect a better introduction to our catalogues than this. But the next most considerable piece, the Ravel *Tzigane*, displays a further facet of Erlih's talents. Here the assured classical technique is suffused in all truth with the spirit of the gipsy; here is no insipid formula, but as exciting playing of *lassu* and *friss* as is to be found. During the opening cadenza, we are not in the concert hall, but sitting round a camp fire in the Hungarian plains; even the entry of the piano accompaniment is hard put to it to dispel the illusion. One day, perhaps, could we have this piece on record with dulcimer, or with gipsy orchestra accompaniment? Ravel provided alternatives of piano or small concert orchestra, and he would be as right in 1956 as he was in 1924 to suppose that otherwise his piece would reach the concert-hall never, and the radio programme only with great difficulty. But I think we could take without heart-failure a dulcimer in 1956, on a gramophone record; and it would be very enjoyable.

The fury of the *Tzigane* necessarily overshadows the remaining shorter pieces; but all are most beautifully played. Only their recorded order seems odd: I am not sure that the Pugnani Kreisler follows the Ravel Sonata very well, and I am sure that the Albéniz *Tango* should not follow the Ravel *Habanera*. But this is the end of the com-

plaints, for a fine quality of recorded sound, coupled with the first-class performance of both partners, makes this a highly desirable record. M.M.

## CHORAL AND SONG

**BACH, J. C. Vauxhall Songs**: Come, Colin; Would you a female heart inspire; Ah, why should love; Lovely yet ungrateful swain; Cease awhile. **Elsie Morison** (soprano). **Sei Canzonette a Due, Op. 4**: No. 1, Già la notte s'avvicina; No. 2, Ah rammenta, oh bella Irene; No. 3, Pur nel sonno almen talora; No. 4, T'intendo sì mio cor; No. 5, Che ciascun per te sospiri; No. 6, Ascoltami, oh Clori. **Jennifer Vyvyan** (soprano), **Elsie Morison** (soprano). **Concerto in F major for Organ and Strings, Op. 7, No. 2. Thurston Dart** (organ). All with **The Boyd Neel Orchestra** directed by **Thurston Dart**. London L'Oiseau Lyre OL50132 (12 in., 39s. 7½d.).

This disc is rather coyly entitled "Mr. Bach at Vauxhall Gardens", and a very attractive disc it is. Mr. Bach is John Christian, youngest son of the great Johann Sebastian, and he spent the greater part of his life as a mature composer in London. Generally speaking, his music, very different from that of his father, tends to consist of a tune and a bass and not much in between, and he was one of the leading exponents of this so-called *galant* style, a simplification of music for the benefit of aristocratic audiences, not to mention the casual listeners who strolled round Vauxhall Gardens. His melodies have a vein of sweet lyricism that endeared them to the boy Mozart when he came to London in 1766; the "London" Bach was always a dominating influence on Mozart, and it is easy to find Mozartian characteristics in his music, for instance, in "Cease awhile" on this record.

Not all this music can be said to have a very certain connection with Vauxhall Gardens. One side consists of songs with English words and orchestral accompaniments sung by Elsie Morison. These come from Bach's three published sets of Vauxhall songs, and the sleeve alleges that the famous Rowlandson engraving of the Gardens, which is sensibly reproduced on the front, actually shows Mrs. Weichsell in full song from the balcony; it was for Mrs. Weichsell that Bach wrote some of these songs. But on the reverse are six short Italian canzonets for two voices with continuo accompaniment, and I do not see how these can have been sung at Vauxhall Gardens. The harpsichord is an unprofitable instrument to play at outdoor concerts, and that of course is why Vauxhall, Marylebone and other Gardens installed an organ in their bandstands; the sound carried so much better. However, the important thing is that these duets are not only lovely songs, but they are most beautifully sung by Jennifer Vyvyan and Elsie Morison. The record is worth buying for them alone. The Vauxhall songs are

also lovely and also very well sung, though I felt here and there that Miss Morison might have been a little more relaxed. In the third and fourth songs one sensed an anxiety to keep things moving, whereas Mrs. Weichsell surely luxuriated in the beautiful sounds she was making and chose easier tempos. And should there not be a short cadenza on the pause in *Ah, why should love*?

The remaining item is the second of six concertos published about 1770 as "for Harpsichord or Piano Forte". It is here played by Thurston Dart on a chamber organ on the sensible grounds that James Hook, the Vauxhall Gardens organist and musical director, would have played it on this instrument. Indeed he must have played the other five on the organ too, as well as any other harpsichord concertos he could get hold of, and I cannot follow the sleeve writer in claiming that there is something especially organic about this particular concerto. Actually some of the other first moments are more interesting, though the final minuet is a most lovely piece, and Mr. Dart's chamber organ is always a pleasure to hear.

I would have liked more woodwind in the Vauxhall songs—there is not nearly enough of the important bassoon solo in *Cease awhile*—but otherwise the quality of the sound is excellent. This is indeed a record of outstanding quality in every way, and I strongly recommend it. We hear all too little of the music Londoners enjoyed in the latter half of the eighteenth century. Some of the operas J. C. Bach wrote for London must surely be dug up soon; they are full of lovely music, admirably suited to the Misses Vyvyan and Morison, and if the time for this is not yet, perhaps Thurston Dart and the Boyd Neel Orchestra could oblige with another selection of Vauxhall music, this time by English composers such as Hook and Samuel Arnold. R.F.

**BACH. "Es erhub sich ein Streit"**—Cantata for the Feast of St. Michael and All Angels, BWV19. **"Gott der Herr ist Sonn' und Schild"**—Reformation Cantata, BWV79. **Gunthild Weber** (soprano), **Lore Fischer** (contralto), **Helmuth Krebs** (tenor), **Herman Schey** (bass), **Berliner Motettenchor, Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra** conducted by **Fritz Lehmann**. D.G.G. Archive APM14005 (12 in., 39s. 7½d.).

*Es erhub sich ein Streit*, a cantata for the Feast of St. Michael the Archangel, draws on the famous passage in Revelation xii. 7-12 beginning "And there was war in heaven, Michael and his angels fighting with the dragon" for its first chorus and the recitative immediately following, the rest of the work dwelling on the ministry of the angels on our behalf.

In the first half of the great opening chorus Bach paints a vivid picture of Satan and his host, represented by a vigorous figure forcefully invading every part of the score, in their battle: and in the second half he suggests their defeat by Michael and his angels by inverting this figure. Schweitzer says (with some exaggeration), "The

agitated and distorted mass falls precipitantly into the depths". Then comes an anti-climax for, following the convention of the day, Bach writes *da capo* and presents the undefeated hosts of evil once making nonsense of the recitative for bass following "Praise God! the Beast lies low".

The Berlin choir throw themselves into the struggle with complete abandon—there is no prelude and the basses enter in the very first bar—and here staccato treatment of the dragon motive is entirely in character. Herman Schey sings more expressively, and less loudly, than he did in the cantata *Brich dem Hungrigen dein Brot* (Archive AP13003) which I reviewed in September of this year, and Gunthild Weber is steadier in tone in her long and not outstandingly interesting aria with oboe *d'amore obbligato*—or is it that it sounds tame after the noise and fury of the battle? An even longer aria follows, after a brief passage of recitative, for the tenor, "Guard dear angels, guard my ways", in which Bach introduces, on the trumpet, the melody of the hymn "Herzlich lieb hab' ich dich, O Herr" ("Truly have I loved Thee, O Lord") as counter-melody to the "angelic" theme of the aria. Accomplished singer though he is, Helmut Krebs sounds exhausted by the prevailing high tessitura of the part, but still lets us hear what a beautiful movement it is. The full orchestra (which includes trumpets and drums) accompanies the final choral.

*Gott der Herr ist Sonn' und Schild* (The Lord is a Sun and Shield) was composed for the Leipzig Reformation Festival of 1735 and the text, in speaking of the horrors of war and salvation from them, probably relates to the War of the Polish Succession (1733-5) from which Saxony, whose sovereign entered Warsaw in 1735 as the bearer of peace, was spared.

The festal prelude, a grand piece, has two themes, the first, of a fanfare nature with horns and drums prominent, and the second a splendidly fashioned and most vigorous theme for violins and woodwind. On these two themes Bach builds his magnificent triumph chorus—which has no conventional *da capo*. It is interesting to note that the particularly melodious phrase the sopranos sing in the two last bars of this chorus appears in the instrumental part of Bach's fine setting of "Now thank we all our God", between the lines of the fully harmonised choral. Before this there is an alto aria, well sung by Lore Fischer, with a text that is a gloss on the opening words of the cantata. It has a flute obbligato and it is a pity that the registration for the organ continuo should use stops of flute quality—contrast is needed here. The work concludes with a duet for soprano and bass, "O my God forsake Thy people never more", in which Miss Weber and Mr. Schey achieve a fine crescendo near the end, and a brief accompanied choral "Uphold us in the true faith".

The chorus again sing very well in this work and the orchestral playing and obbligato parts are most satisfactorily done. I must add a special word of praise for the beautiful veiled trumpet tone in the tenor aria of *Es erhub sich ein Streit*. The recording gives, in general, excellent balance, but the

chorus tends to overwhelm the orchestra in the first chorus of *Es erhub sich ein Streit*, the continuo bass stands out too much in the soprano aria and, in the other cantata, the horns are rather too prominent in the opening chorus.

The card gives only the German texts. There is a score of the Reformation Cantata with English words (Novello), but no translation of the other. I give, therefore, the first words of each number as a clue to its contents: 1. There uprose a fierce strife. 2. Praise God! the Beast lies low! 3. God's angels watch do o'er us keep. 4. How frail in truth is man! 5. Guard, dear angels, guard my ways. 6. The presence of the blessed angels must we cherish. 7. Let Thine angels close attend me.

This disc, all in all, is one of the best among the recordings so far issued of the church cantatas and can therefore be warmly recommended. A.R.

**DANYEL.** Why canst thou not; Time, cruel time; I die when as I do not see.

**DOWLAND.** I saw my lady weep; Flow my tears. René Soames (tenor), Walter Gerwig (lute), Johannes Koch (viola da gamba). D.G.G. Archive EPA37010 (7 in., 16s. 8½d.).

The only criticism to be made of this disc is that the songs chosen are all too much in one mood (a melancholy one) and one tempo (a slow one), the partial exception being the first of the Danyel songs. It would have been nice to have had one of Dowland's few cheerful songs, such as "Awake, sweet love, thou are returned", and one in similar vein by Danyel. For the rest it remains to praise René Soames's tasteful and expressive singing, the excellent accompanying on the double-choir alto lute (a copy of an instrument of 1620) and a viola da gamba (of 1677), and first-rate recording. The words of the songs are given on two cards (they are somewhat rearranged from the order in the Fellowes edition in the second verse of "I saw my lady weep"), and a warning is given that "in order to preserve the character of this music it is essential that the volume control should not be advanced unnecessarily". Verb. sap. A.R.

**EGK.** La Tentation de Saint-Antoine. Bernard Lefort (baritone), George Alès (violin), Pierre Doukan (violin), Pierre Ladhuite (viola), Roger Albin ('cello), directed by Louis de Froment.

**FRANCAIX.** (a) Cinq Poèmes. (b) Invocation à la Volupté. (c) L'adolescence Clémentine. (a), (b) and (c) Bernard Lefort (baritone), (a) and (c) Jean Françaix (piano), (a) and (c) Fernand Marseau (flute), (c) Jacques Lancelot (clarinet), (b) L'Ensemble Orchestral de L'Oiseau Lyre conducted by Louis de Froment. London L'Oiseau Lyre OL50134 (12 in., 39s. 7½d.).

Listening to this disc through is just like making an entire meal of chocolates—even if some of them have liqueur centres.

Bernard Lefort is a most talented singer, of great charm and much sensibility; he has, too, the purely technical virtues of crystal-clear enunciation and steady production; but if he fails to hold our attention throughout the Françaix side the lapse is more attributable to the slowness of the music than to any shortcomings of his. A miniaturist (and an admirable pianist, as we can hear), Jean Françaix excels at deft humour and elegant lyricism (as in Nos. 2 and 3 of the Marot cycle), but is less successful at holding together the longer periods of the *Invocation à la Volupté*. Balance between voice and instruments is well judged throughout.

The Werner Egk cycle, a cantata based on eighteenth-century verses and airs, is a very different proposition, and is a curious and welcome addition to the gramophone catalogues. Though the melodies are old (they include the *Folies d'Espagne* and other well-known tunes), they are set against a very free and ingenious accompaniment (like Britten's *Beggar's Opera*, only more so); and though the words deal with the temptation of St. Anthony, "the humour is broad and the vocabulary far from saintly", as the sleeve-note puts it. (I observe with interest that a pamphlet giving the French words with an English translation is available: I have not seen it, but certain points strike me as untranslatable...) Once again M. Lefort shows his feeling for phrase, and the clarity of his words, and the string quartet playing, too, is excellent; only one momentary lack of unanimity (in No. 2) mars otherwise first-rate ensemble work. At the opening of the cycle, the voice is given too much emphasis at the expense of the strings, thus giving the lie to the words "Quel horrible fracas"; but there is a speedy improvement. I fancy that many people will enjoy this side a lot. The titles quoted on the record sleeve, by the way, are not the movement titles but the names of the original eighteenth-century airs. P.B.

**HANDEL.** Solomon.

Solomon John Cameron (bar.)  
Zadok Alexander Young (ten.)  
Queen Elsie Morison (sop.)  
Queen of Sheba Lois Marshall (sop.)  
Beecham Choral Society, Chorus  
Master Denis Vaughan, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Sir Thomas Beecham, Bart.  
Columbia 33CX1397-8 (two 12 in., 39s. 7½d.).

If proof were needed that there is abundant life and beauty in most of Handel's scandalously neglected oratorios, not only in the uncharacteristic *Messiah*, it is to be found here in this truly wonderful performance of *Solomon*. Perhaps, economic and other factors being what they are, the revival of these great works will come about only through the gramophone, and be confined to it. I hope, therefore, that Sir Thomas Beecham, incomparable Handelian, is undertaking a long series of recordings of the oratorios and will not fail to include *Susanna* which, when revived in Germany (at Halle, the composer's birthplace) in 1922 so profoundly moved the large



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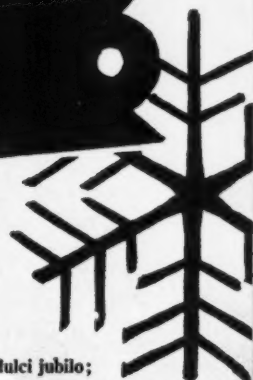
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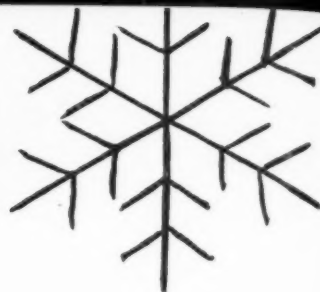
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audience that heard it. This exquisite idyll, which contains some of Handel's loveliest music, is companion piece to *Solomon*, both works having been composed within four months of the summer of 1748, when Handel was in his sixty-third year.

Rockstro says of a revival of *Solomon* in 1845 that "its auditors were quite unprepared for the beauty of its splendid choruses", and indeed they are the equal of the greatest in, let us say, *Israel in Egypt*.

In the new edition of the work he has made Sir Thomas explains, in a foreword to his admirable sleeve notes, that he has deliberately altered the whole character of the piece, which he regards as non-ecclesiastical, and given much more prominence to the solo numbers, with their human interest and intimacy. None of the great choruses, however, is sacrificed and no one need mourn the exclusion of the Levite, a secondary character: but I do regret that the scene of Solomon's judgment on the two women contending for the child had to be omitted, particularly the Trio in which the three characters are so finely characterised. This apart—and it is not easy to see how it could have been accommodated in the scheme—the re-arrangement has been done with great skill and its order made perfectly clear in Sir Thomas's notes. He has re-orchestrated the entire score with results that may occasionally give pain to some musicologists, but which seem to me in perfect taste and character. Since Handel used three trombones in *Saul*—though this is certainly exceptional—it cannot be called anachronistic to use them for Zadok's recitative "Imperial Solomon", and Zadok might also be considered a near relation of Sarastro!

The Overture gives us at once the measure of the fine orchestral playing that is one of the great pleasures of this issue. In the fugal *Allegro moderato* every part is heard with absolute clarity and in the few bars of slow music with which it concludes there is no conventional "monumental" cadence. These bars, in this edition, run straight into the first of the great double choruses "Your harps and cymbals sound to great Jehovah's praise": and here we have the measure of the Beecham Choral Society. Admirably trained by Denis Vaughan it sings with great vitality and with bright tone and—wonderful to relate—has a really strong and uninhibited tenor section. The masterly use Handel makes of a phrase consisting of a few notes descending scale-wise in this chorus is something to marvel at. *Solomon* (an alto in the original score) now appears with a humble and moving prayer (accompanied recitative) to God, that He may grace the finished Temple: and another great double chorus follows, this one, "With pious heart and holy tongue", being preceded by a beautiful slow chordal section.

John Cameron shows an imaginative grasp of his part and sings very expressively here and elsewhere and Alexander Young is equally good as Zadok. Sir Thomas allows the High Priest his air, "Sacred raptures cheer my breast", in full and Mr. Young sings the divisions in it cleanly:

but these two and the other two artists seem almost wholly to avoid the use of the *apogiatura*.

Handel's love of nature is exquisitely depicted in the murmuring accompaniment to Solomon's air, "What though I trace each herb and flower", in which the humility of the great King is again shown.

Solomon's Queen, a daughter of the Pharaoh's, has been described as a vapid character compared with the Queen of Sheba, but Elsie Morrison's quiet singing of the lovely middle section of her air, "Bless'd the day", and later of the exquisite song "With thee the unsheltered moor I'd tread"—taken at an unusually slow tempo—gives depth to her character. Sir Thomas has, rightly, restored the text that Victorian prudery bowdlerised. The Queen does not sing "Bless'd the day when I was brought to behold this favour'd spot", but "when I was led to behold the nuptial bed"! This first section of the oratorio ends with the ravishingly beautiful chorus "May no rash intruder disturb their soft hours", with its realistic imitations of the nightingale on the flute, beautifully sung and accompanied with the greatest delicacy.

In accordance with his design Sir Thomas goes straight now to the third part of the work and brings the Queen of Sheba on the scene with that brilliant little orchestral piece he has made so well known to us.

Lois Marshall is well cast as Sheba's Queen, for her voice, warmer in tone than Elsie Morrison's, brings out the difference of character. Her air "Every sight these eyes behold" is much cut. This is a lovely voice, best displayed towards the end of the work in the superb air, with oboe obbligato, "Will the sun forget to streak Eastern skies with amber ray?", but I hope Miss Marshall will not allow the habit of explosive consonants at the end of words to grow on her.

Solomon's entertainment for the Queen introduces a series of magnificent choruses, very well sung, and including the tremendous one "From the censer curling rise". The work ends with another great double chorus, "Praise the Lord with harp and tongue".

The recording is wholly worthy of this inspired performance. It is spacious, contains well the big choral sound, and is particularly happy in the woodwind detail and the tone of the strings. The balance, also, is excellent, though the antiphonal effects cannot, of course, produce the effect they would in the concert hall. I have played the discs four times and each time with added delight.

Sir Thomas truly says, in his autobiography, "A Mingled Chime": "Since his (Handel's) time mankind has heard no music written for voice which can even feebly rival his for grandeur of build and tone, nobility and tenderness of melody, scholastic skill and ingenuity and inexhaustible variety of effect", and, it might be added, all this is done with an absolute simplicity and clarity of presentation.

One can understand, as the last strains of this towering masterpiece die away, why Beethoven, asked whom he considered the

greatest composer that ever lived, replied, "Handel: to him I bow the knee"; and this on the strength of the only Handel scores he knew at the time, *Messiah* and *Alexander's Feast*.

Handel's music, too, has (as Streatfield said long ago) a tonic force that is not for our good that we should neglect. To-day we need it more than ever before. A.R.

**MARENZIO. Six Madrigals:** Vezzosi augelli; Ah! dispietata morte; Zeffiro torna; Ecco più mai bella; Scaldava il sol; O dolce anima mia.

**GESUALDO. Six Madrigals:** Luci serene e chiare; Ecco morirò dunque; Io tacerò; Dolcissima mia vita; Itene ó miei sospiri; Moro lasso mio duolo. **Singgemeinschaft Rudolf Lamy** conducted by **Rudolf Lamy**. D.G.G. Archive APM14045 (12 in., 39s. 7½d.).

The notoriety Carlo Gesualdo, Prince of Venosa, acquired as a murderer and an inventor of daring harmonics has obscured the true value of his music and, very welcome though the six madrigals here recorded are, we shall need to know something of his remarkable church music (motets and responsories) before arriving at a balanced picture. I hope D.G.G. will remedy this deficiency. His contemporaries, though of course on the side of his wife and her lover, condemned Gesualdo not for murdering them—which he did not do—but for having them murdered by three of his servants, a course no self-respecting man would take. He was, as Einstein says in his monumental study of the Italian Madrigal, a weakling and an unchivalrous avenger of his honour.

Through his madrigals runs a stylistic duality. Words such as "death" and "pain" evoke dissonances or chromaticisms. The treatment of the word "mora" (die) in *Io tacerò* (I will be silent) is a typical example of the sudden, and here beautiful, introduction of alien harmony to underline the word. In his free vocal writing Gesualdo shows much skill but in the late sixteenth century his style, as Einstein says, was already out-of-date.

Such considerations will only concern those who have an extensive acquaintance with the history of the Italian madrigal, the rest of us will find much to enjoy in these madrigals for their own sake. There is great beauty of sound in *Luci serene e chiare*, with its lovely recapitulation of the opening chordal phrases, and the close conjunction of minor and major intervals known to grammarians as false relations—a thing typical of his time—found in several of the final cadences in the madrigals recorded above hardly sounds odd in the twentieth century.

The most extravagant chromaticisms come at the end of *Dolcissima mia vita*, prompted by the word "morire", and the passage must be exceedingly difficult to sing with intonation as exact as we find on the disc. The skilful quoting of the best known and most often quoted number in the set, "Moro lasso" (death again!) reminds one of the shortcomings of the old *Anthologie Sonore* record in this respect.

The six five-part madrigals sung on the disc (two of them have two sections which may be considered as separate pieces) are published with Italian and German texts in Weissman's edition (Peters, No. 4363).

To turn over the disc and play Marenzio's four- and five-part madrigals is to hear the difference between a very talented dilettante and a genius, and also to listen to music for the most part radiating poetry and gladness and without morbid preoccupations. Here, though there are as marked changes of tempo, "modern" harmonies, word painting, and so forth, there is no antithesis of style and there are often—as in *Vezzosi augelli* cadences of remarkable beauty. There is also use of antiphony markedly absent from Gesualdo's madrigals.

Perhaps the most striking piece is *Scaldava il sol*, a picture, as Einstein says, of "the sultry midday heat of the Roman Compagna", with the shepherd and his flock drowsing and only the cricket chirping: but every one of these madrigals is most enjoyable.

The tonal quality, chording, precision of attack, and intonation of the Singgemeinschaft are all admirable and it seems ungrateful to find one's satisfaction not complete. What is lacking is the distinctive individuality of each voice that made the singing of Nadia Boulanger's group in the first (less so in the later one) Monteverdi disc and in the first English Singers discs (old H.M.V. black label) so memorable. The very thing that is death to performance of motets is life to that of madrigals.

The 1953 *L'Anthologie Sonore* disc made by the Ensemble Italian "Luca Marenzio" (not issued here) establishes the point. Here one hears a reedy soprano and one more sweet-toned, a rich contralto, a lyrical tenor and a plummy bass; and this sort of thing, it seems to me, is what is needed, besides the native Italian crispness of enunciation. Nevertheless I warmly recommend this disc for what it *does* give us, and hope for more recordings of madrigals by the "most sweet swan" (*Il più dolce cigno*), as Marenzio was called, and motets by Gesualdo, in which his style notably alters to conform to the requirement of sacred music. A.R.

**MOZART.** Oiseaux, si tous les ans, K.307. Dans un bois solitaire, K.308. Ridente la calma, K.152. Un moto di gioia mi sento, K.579. Abendempfindung, K.523. Der Zauberer, K.472. Die Verschwörung, K.518. Louise, K.320. Das Veilchen, K.476. Sehnsucht nach dem Frühling, K.596 ("Komm, lieber Mai, und mache"). Margot Guillaume (soprano), Fritz Neumeyer (Mozart piano). D.G.G. Archive AP13040 (10 in., 29s. 6½d.).

This is very fresh and lovely singing, not so crisp in enunciation or quite so finished in style as Elisabeth Schwarzkopf's on Columbia 33CX1321, but with a charm all its own, and with a simple pathos in *Louise* and *Das Veilchen* that is very moving. The two songs not included in the Schwarzkopf-Gieseking disc are *Un moto di gioia mi sento*

and *Die Verschwörung*. The first of these ("My heart in my bosom is bounding with pleasure") was sung by the Susanna of the 1789 revival of *Figaro* in place of the aria "Venite, inginocchiatevi", owing to some caprice, one supposes, of the artist. The other song is a pastoral piece about the love of Damon for Chloe, and both the songs are most delightful.

The Mozart piano made by J. Gottlieb Fiehl at the end of the eighteenth century, and reconstructed by Martin Scholz in later years, adds to the pleasure of the disc. Fritz Neumeyer's accompaniments on it are well played, and the balance in this excellent recording is good. A.R.

**PERGOLESI.** Stabat Mater. Friederike Sailer (soprano), Hanne Münch (contralto), Mainz Chamber Orchestra conducted by Günter Kehr. Vox PL9960 (12 in., 39s. 7½d.).

In this country Pergolesi's *Stabat Mater* is usually sung by a women's choir (when it is sung at all) and that is how it was recorded on an early Nixa LP, recently withdrawn. But the composer probably intended it for two solo voices, and that is how it is recorded on the new Vox. The accompaniment is for strings alone, and there should also be some keyboard instrument to play the continuo and fill in the wide gaps between Pergolesi's tune and bass—for much of this music is in two-part counterpoint. I would expect that at the first performance it was an organ. On this record a harpsichord pings fitfully in the first item, but I was not conscious of hearing it in the other thirteen, with the result that some of the music sounds thinner than Pergolesi intended. Apart from this, Vox have provided a most stylish performance. The singing is good, and though the soprano sometimes shows traces of effort when reaching for her top notes she gets there all right; the string playing is good too, and the quality of the sound excellent. For some reason the pitch drops momentarily at the very end of the first side, but this is a tiny fault in a fine disc. The best reason for buying it of course is for the sake of the music. These fourteen solos and duets have a sweet melancholy that appeals to the heart rather than to the intellect, but is none the worse for that.

I happen to possess three vocal scores of this work, each published in a different century. They are much more like each other than any one of them is like the edition used for this recording. I know nothing about the early sources for the work; I hope that there has been no doctoring. On this record there are interrupted cadences instead of ordinary ones six bars from the end of I and nine from the end of VI; semiquaver figures in the latter half of V are not dotted; the wonderful B naturals three and six bars from the end of XIII are sung as B flats; and so on. All my scores are in opposition to the record on these points. But I must hasten to add that the performance shows such unusual knowledge of early eighteenth century style that someone probably had good reasons for what was done. A great many appoggiaturas which are not in the score are sung, but they are all such as

singers would have added two hundred years ago and more, and their inclusion adds considerably to the air of authenticity this record has. R.F.

**STRAUSS, R. Metamorphoses. Four Last Songs.** Christel Goltz (soprano), Pro Musica Symphony Orchestra, Vienna, Bamberg Symphony conducted by Heinrich Hollreiser. Vox PL9400 (12 in., 39s. 7½d.).

Four Last Songs: della Casa, V.P.O., Boehm (12/53) LW5066 or (2/54) LXT2865 Schwarzkopf, Philharmonia, Ackermann (1/54) 33CX1107

At last! A recording of *Metamorphoses* is something all Straussians have been waiting for, and they will not be disappointed with this issue. The conductor knocks four minutes off the thirty Strauss gives as the duration of the work, but there seems no undue haste in the playing and there is a fine clarity in the parts. The tone of the twenty-three solo stringed instruments is full and warm, with a very occasional "wow" in the top parts, and this remarkable essay in the art of sustained polyphonic writing provides a fascinating study in contrapuntal architecture and harmonic sonority. The theme played by two violas soon after the start is revealed on the last page of the score as a quotation, with the words "In Memoriam" placed beneath it, from the funeral march of Beethoven's "Eroica" symphony; and in the next theme, coming immediately after on two violas and cello, Strauss, it seems to me, is obviously quoting the phrase from the end of the Second Act of *Tristan* in which King Mark laments Tristan's betrayal of his trust and friendship. The work is therefore a noble elegy in memory of the fallen and deceived. These themes, and a third of more lyrical character, are combined together in a masterly way and the greatest emotional climax is reserved for the end of the recapitulation when the funeral march theme is subjected to a *stretto*, one part clashing against another, as if in a cry of anguished mourning.

Playing over the recordings of Strauss so-called "Last Songs", I came to the conclusion that the Casa-Bohm disc (Decca LW5056) was the best, vocally and—in style if not in recording—orchestally, even though there were many lovely things, vocally, in the Schwarzkopf-Ackermann disc (Columbia 33CX1107) on which is also her beautiful singing of the final scene from *Capriccio*. Christel Goltz's voice moves too heavily in these songs and the unsteadiness of her tone above the staff is a drawback where a sense of calm and repose, through purity of tone and a good legato line, is called for. She has less difficulty with the cruelly high *tesitura* of *Frühling* than the other two and her low notes are richer in

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quality. Miss Goltz is at her best in the last of the songs, *Im Abendroth*, and least good (as Miss Schwarzkopf was) in *Beim Schlafengehen*, which one has yet to hear a soprano who can match the calm beauty of the violin solo preceding the entry of the voice.

The orchestral part gives us more detail than in either of the previous recordings and the horn solo at the end of *September* is played most beautifully. The conductor plays the orchestral prelude to *Im Abendroth* almost as slowly as Ackermann does, but I am not sure that this is wrong. In short we have on this disc a vocally not well disciplined but intelligent and sometimes beautiful rendering of these very moving songs. A.R.

**WOLF.** *Das verlassene Mägdlein; Au eine Aeolsharfe; Verborgenheit; Der Knabe und das Immlin; Zitronenfalter im April; Nixe Binsefuss; Im Frühling; Elfenlied; Karwoche.* Erna Berger (soprano), Ernst-Günther Scherzer (piano). D.G.G. DG17058 (10 in., 29s. 6jd.).

I have never heard Erna Berger sing Lieder in public—nor, for that matter, before on record. There is not likely to be disagreement that in this selection of Mörike songs she is rather dull. The words are clearly enunciated, the characteristic tone seems hardly to have changed at all since that Shepherd (in *Tannhäuser*) which she recorded more than a quarter of a century ago, and though some of the breathing is short, the joins are skilfully done. But hardly ever is there a trace of expressive colouring in the voice. In *The Boy and the Bee* she delivers the bee's message with a faint suggestion, no more, of mischievous sparkle; but most of the singing is distressingly blank.

The pianist shows little imagination in his handling of Wolf's wonderfully varied and subtle accompaniments, and apparently he cannot stretch a tenth—a small point, perhaps, but it matters in that Wolf clearly distinguishes (e.g. in *An eine Aeolsharfe* or in *Im Frühling*) between the chords he wants spread and those he wants "straight". The recording is clear, and the balance is generally good. A.P.

**AN ANTHOLOGY OF CANTE FLAMENCO.** R. Montoya Jarrito, Niño de Almadén, Bernardo el de los Lobitos, Rafael Romero, El Chaqueta, Pericón de Cadiz, Niño de Málaga, Pepe el de la Matrona, Lolita Triana, with Perico el del Lunar (guitar). London Ducretet-Thomson TKL93094-6 (three 12 in., 118s. 10jd.).

The word "flamenco", like "jazz", has been used so loosely to cover widely divergent types of material that it is no wonder the public at large is hazy about what it really does imply. The confusion has only been deepened by the appearance of records labelled "flamenco" which are mere commercial travesties of the genuine article, and by the extraordinary assumption of authority on the subject by anyone who has so much as heard a stray gipsy in Irún railway-station café. When news of this

large Ducretet-Thomson anthology began to filter through, then, there was, along with a natural speculation about its contents, a real hope that it would provide the opportunity for an informed and detailed presentation of the subject which would stand as an authoritative reference point for all those interested.

The records have been with me for some time, and tremendous pleasure they have given me; but as the impact on the British public of this big collection would obviously depend on the manner of its presentation, this review has been held up until this could be seen. It is with real regret that I have to say that on this important point the company has fallen down badly. The notes with the records (which are encased in quite unreasonably hideous sleeves) vary between uninformed purple prose, absurdly inaccurate statements, and meaningless blather. Some of the worst guff is the fault of the translator, who perpetrates passages like: "the richness of modulation of very ancient scales are (sic) given tonal poverty which is the consequence of the employment of the two modern scales; the phrase finally ends up vulgarly metrified and goes on each day". Apart from this, however, few with any knowledge will credit, for example, that all the Spanish ballet companies (Antonio, Pilar López, Carmen Amaya and the rest) "have only been able to offer . . . what, in reality, are the *jondo* styles". It is, in fact, clear throughout the entire presentation that *flamenco* and *jondo* are not differentiated at all, and that the latter term is erroneously embraced in the former—rather like referring to the harpsichord, in a treatise on keyboard music, as a piano.

This "flamenco" anthology, then, includes some *jondo* styles, which are labelled "Basic song forms" or "Songs without guitar"; at the other end of the scale, it includes items which, however attractive in themselves, have no right here at all—a *Nana* and a *Marianas*, for example, not to speak of the somewhat debased *Fandango de Huelva*. The whole system of classification needs adequate explanation: as it stands, the collection is made up of "Dance songs", "Songs of the East", "Malagan styles", "Basic song forms", "Peasant styles", "Native songs" and "Songs without guitar", in that order. This gives no clear picture of the subject, and indeed the organisation could be argued on various details: there are several types of *cante* which are not included at all, and the only reason for including *Cantes de trilla* (accompanied only by an imitation of a mule trotting) in the meaningless category "Peasant styles" rather than in "Songs without guitar" must be that the latter label was really meant to cover *jondo* styles. Such a pity that this wonderful opportunity for clarifying the subject was not seized!

Considered purely on performance grounds, however, this anthology is an unquestioned triumph (and the recording quality is excellent). Of the eight singers (Lolita Triana, mentioned on the label, appears to be a *persona muta*), at least five are in the highest class of *flamenco* artists—the Niño de Almadén, who contributes some of the most moving singing here; the

virile-voiced El Chaqueta; R. Montoya Jarrito; the exciting Pericón de Cadiz; and Pepe el de la Matrona, an exponent of the convulsive, strangled style of *flamenco* singing. We already know from previous records Rafael Romero, whose voice has the insidious roughness of a cat's tongue. It is a pity that among the *cantaores* there are no women; and it would have been interesting to have heard other guitarists for variety, much as one admires the accomplished playing of Perico el del Lunar (only in the enigmatic *Tarantas*, with its strange harmonies, did I think him too studied).

Detailed consideration of each item in this collection is not called for; but I should like to mention a few of outstanding interest. Among the "Dance songs" are a fine *Tientos*, a compelling *Sevillanas*, and a moving *Bulerías*, as well as a scarcely authentic but brilliantly sung *Tango flamenco* and two rarities on record—a *Mirabras* in which Rafael Romero indulges in some characteristic vocal *glissandi*, and a *Romerías* with some wonderfully long-drawn-out phrases. In the Malagan section, the Niño de Almadén walks away with all the honours with his three items; Pepe el de la Matrona contributes an exciting *Liviana* and *Serrana*, as well as a fine *Soled* in the "Basic forms"; but for me almost the cream of the collection is a superb *Deblas* and four *Saetas* recorded against their proper background of a *banda* of bugles and drums. All these, however, are not *flamenco* at all, but pure *cante jondo*. Which is where we came in. L.S.

**CAROLS.** A Virgin most pure (Traditional—Gilbert—setting by Wood): **Shepherds, in the field abiding** (Woodward—French or Flemish melody harmonised by Wood): **A Carol of Adoration** (English melody modernised and adapted by Pickard-Cambridge): **A great and mighty wonder** (St. Germanus and Neale—German melody harmonised by Praetorius): **O Little Town of Bethlehem** (Brooks—Walford Davies) with organ: **Gabriel's Message** (Gould—Basque Noël noted and revised by Gould—arranged and harmonised by Pettman): **Up! Good Christian Folk, and listen** (Words and music from "Piae Cantiones", harmonised by Woodward): **Unto us is Born a Son** (Words and music from "Piae Cantiones", harmonised by Palmer) with organ. Sung unaccompanied unless otherwise stated. **The Choir of Christ's Hospital** conducted by Cecil Cochrane. H.M.V. DLP1133 (10 in., 26s. 5d.).

These carols are of the type broadcast every Christmas from King's College Chapel, Cambridge; by which I mean that they are a little off the beaten track, but not too much so, un-Victorian, and immediately attractive. On this record they are extremely well sung and beautifully recorded. The boys sing with bell-like clarity and plenty of expression, and for the most part dead in tune; the ensemble of the whole choir is remarkable. The most extended piece is Walford Davies's *O little*

*Town of Bethlehem*, and the baritone solo in it is nicely done; it is to be hoped that the singer's name is on the sleeve, which I have not seen. Parts of *Up, Good Christian Folk* sounded a little low for the boys' voices, and the intonation was momentarily shaky once or twice in *A great and mighty wonder*; this last (better known to me at any rate in another translation, or as *Es ist ein' Ros'*) might have been sung with more expression. But generally speaking the beautiful tone, exemplary ensemble and sensitive gradations make this a fine record reflecting great credit on the conductor, whose name is new to me. Music at Christ's Hospital must be in very good shape these days. R.F.

## OPERATIC

### MASSENET. *Manon*.

Manon Lescaut

Victoria de los Angeles (sop.)

Le chevalier Des Grieux

Henri Legay (ten.)

Lescaut

Michel Dens (bar.)

Le comte Des Grieux

Jean Borthayre (bar.)

Guillot de Morfontaine

René Hérent (ten.)

De Brétigny

Jean Vieuille (bar.)

Poussette

Liliane Berton (sop.)

Javotte

Raymonde Notti (sop.)

Rosette

Marthe Serres (sop.)

Chorus and Orchestra of the  
Théâtre National de L'Opéra-Comique  
conducted by Pierre Monteux.  
Chorus Master: Marcel Pichereau. H.M.V. ALP1394-7 (four 12 in., 158s. 6d.).

Wolff

(12/51) LXT2618-20

This is a most welcome issue (seeing that there have been already two of Puccini's luscious but inferior treatment of the tale), welcome also because as *opéra comique* *Manon* is an out and out masterpiece with scarcely a poor page. Perhaps, feeling that eight sides is a lot of money to lay out, you may say that part of the *Cours La Reine* scene (the scene by the Seine where we first see Manon in her guilty splendour, the price of her shame) and the earlier part of the road to Le Havre are rather uneventful. But all in all it is very much better to err on the side of fullness than to do what Decca did in their issue of 1951—which was to cut wholesale to go on four sides and fill-in with an often otiose running commentary in French which made the set virtually unplayable more than a few times through—so exasperating was the explanation. Replaying that set makes one realise how far recording has come too. We hardly notice to-day—or take for granted—effects of perspective and stereophonic atmosphere which would have amazed us as little as five years back. In nearly every possible way the new set outclasses the old—but that is not to denigrate the *Manon* of Mlle Micheau, which was very idiomatic and accomplished. Otherwise the cast was, I think, inferior to this. And I prefer Pierre Monteux's less hurried handling of the score: when Massenet affectionately marks a passage for the strings "bien chanté"

that is exactly what it becomes. The extensively used *mélodrames*, spoken dialogue over music, are turned in exactly the right way and among the men at least it all sounds extremely natural and pleasing. In the Decca set it was the chevalier who had the foreign accent, Manon the Parisian perfection. Here it is the other way about! In speaking and even sometimes in singing, Miss de los Angeles sounds decidedly *un-French*, not that this is a point that really matters, though it may just stand you off a shade from her interpretation in a performance of the work otherwise, so very idiomatic. Try side three. It contains the whole of the ravishing scene in the runaway lovers' lodgings in the rue Vivienne—from the reading of the letter (beautifully recorded) to the incursion of the bold gentlemen, Lescaut and De Bretigny, both extremely good by the way: Des Grieux's charming singing continuing on one side of the stage while Lescaut draws Manon aside to tell her the "plot" to carry off her lover by force. It is quite beautifully done—one can almost feel the light fading. Then Manon alone with the table—very beautifully done also, and the conductor prevents the soprano from spreading it (the tune, not the table) as she shows signs of wanting to do. Then Des Grieux's return from the post and Le Réve which Henri Legay does very charmingly and domestically, just right—though the *mesa di voce* he essays on "Il faut encor" is not quite a success (as Schipa's was), and the penultimate held note is not above suspicion either. Lastly, Manon's cry "Mon pauvre chevalier" is not crystal clear in recording. But the whole side gives you a fair sample of the grace and appeal of the opera as done here in true scale.

Henri Legay I have only once heard in the flesh and I liked him very much: it is the kind of French tenor voice for the part, and though he has rather a battle (and one juddering note) in the climax of "Ah fuyez", in the Saint Sulpice scene he is very much alive as the hero of the piece, especially in the small talk and the first meeting. About Miss de los Angeles I am less convinced. That she is a most appealing artist and a lovely singer in many ways I cannot dispute. But she sounds a shade mature to my ears for this role and strangely enough she does not much move me as many inferior Manons have. Even in the passionate reiterations of "N'est-ce plus ma main que cette main presse" she never develops the intensity of feeling you had from Fanny Heldy—that blend of coaxing and self-accusation—and though she sings such things as the gavotte, the prayer and "A nous les amours" with lyrical ease and musical style, something just escapes her in the more intimate moments—something which can bring Manon instantly before our eyes. In the sense that Yvonne Printemps with infinitely less vocal equipment could make Reynaldo Hahn's "Les petit Mozart" live for us, Miss de los Angeles does comparatively little for Manon apart (and I agree it is the major consideration!) from singing along in her own glorious way. On the strength of her *Desdemona* recently I should have thought

Miss de los Angeles could make this part irresistible: but the rather mirthless laughter and the too sturdy way with that wilting entry, "Je suis encore toute étouffée", suggest that her imagination is not kindled by the idea of the heroine. Even "Tu vois? Je suis encore coquette" just before she dies has a shade less character than I would have foretold from so famous and justly adored a soprano.

But I suspect that most reactions will not be generally shared: most English people will feel primarily that it is delightful to hear this very French role sung without any French shrillness and in a manner so generally grateful to the ear. In gratitude, most people will gladly turn a deaf ear to the absence of those little touches of lightly sensuous mischief, those little scarcely audible *moues* and frailties which the perfect Manon should be able to supply. The chorus, very authentically Parisian these, and the orchestra are on their best form (one gets a little bored with the ballet, however). The gaming scene is wonderfully vivid: and the tenor very much at his best in the reproachful "Manon, véritable sirène" passages.

All in all it gave me great pleasure, though I have thought it right to mention a faint disappointment in the principal assumption, because so much depends after all on falling and staying in love with *perfid* Manon. But as a modern performance, for the greater part very clearly recorded, the new set will take a lot of beating. It leaves the other LP set far behind. P.H.-W.

NICOLAI. "The Merry Wives of Windsor"—Excerpts: Nein, das ist wirklich doch zu keck; Nun eilt herbei; Als Bublein klein; In einem Waschkorb; Horch die Lerche singt im Hain; Wohl denn, gefasst ist der Entschluss—So schweb' ich dir Geliebter zu; O süßer Mond. **Anny Schlemm** (soprano), **Walther Ludwig** (tenor), **Maria Stader** (soprano), **Margarete Klose** (contralto), **Kim Borg** (bass), **Eberhard Wächter** (baritone), **Bavarian Radio Chorus and Orchestra, Munich Philharmonic Orchestra, Württemberg State Orchestra, Stuttgart**, conducted by **Ferdinand Leitner**. D.G.G. DGM19049 (12 in., 39s. 7½d.).

Although B.B.C. *Woman's Hour* once used the overture for a signature tune, and the Carl Rosa have fostered the clever and tuneful old piece, yet Nicolai's *Falstaff* opera never "goes" in this country. Is it that Verdi's (1893) completely overshadows it? Of course that is a work of genius, Nicolai's only a work of talent. Yet all things considered—and especially the tenor romance and the Windsor Forest Scene considered—I believe Verdi owes a little something to the German who died so young.

At least Nicolai's tunes are very taking; the opening duet of the wives reading the identical love notes is hard to get out of the head, and so is Frau Pluth (or as we should say, Mrs. Ford) in "Nun eilt herbei", made beautifully once by Lotte Lehmann and more recently by Cebotari, with more character and clearer accentuation than

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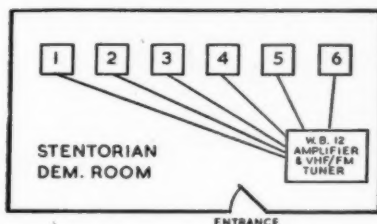
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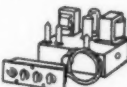
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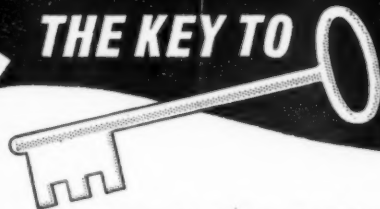


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here. Anny Schlemm is quite pleasant, however, and the whole ensemble under Dr. Leitner is well focused, well recorded. The third number is the equivalent of Verdi's "Quand ero paggio", fat old F. singing of his days as the Duke of Norfolk's page. Borg does well, and one sees why it is still done in Germany as a bass encore piece quite often: the next duet is the one where, with capital good fun, each of the singers fools the other: Falstaff and Ford in disguise (Borg and Wächter) keep exchanging the phrase "Wie freu ich mich" (What fun it will be), the one thinking of his rendezvous with Mrs. Ford, the other of how he will pay out Falstaff when he catches him there. Then comes the tenor romance, "The lark sings in the woodland groves", and it should be much less constrictedly sung by this tenor. There follows the pretty duet for the lovers but not, alas, the quartet which, as in *Faust*, displays two pairs of lovers simultaneously. Anne's aria in Act III, Scene 1, shows up Maria Stader as rather colourless and even tentative, which is a pity, for this is most attractive music once more. The last band is the rather Mendelssohnian "night" chorus which features in the overture also.

All in all, this is a very well engineered and enjoyable collection of some of the good bits of an opera which is far more aristocratic as music than anything (say) Lortzing composed. If in doubt, try about half-way through band one; it might almost be Mozart for a few minutes. The high spirits and the full recording will be noted there too. P.H.-W.

#### PERGOLESI. *La Serva Padrona*.

Serpina **Guiditta Mazzoleni** (sop.)  
 Uberto **Marcello Cortis** (bass)  
**Württembergisches Staatsorchester**  
 conducted by **Fritz Leitner**. **Walter Biller** (cello continuo), **Fritz Neumeyer** (harpisichord). D.G.G. Archive  
 APM14064 (12 in., 39s. 7½d.).  
 Giulini, La Scala (4/56) 38CX1340

There is really not very much to choose between the two available versions. The recent Columbia issue had slightly more sparkle and slightly more character and vivacity in the two singing roles taken by Rosa Carteri and Rossi-Lemeni who have bigger voices but less sense of period style than the pair listed above. On the other hand, I considered that those two sounded as if they were enjoying it more as a live performance than these, who are more like concert singers. The question: are they enjoying it more than we are? must remain a mystery. By ear alone, a comic opera in which the third party of the triangle is a mute, must always be something less than overwhelming! While fully recognising the historical importance of the little piece as the parent of opéra-comique in Paris and as the most vital of Neapolitan intermezzi of the time, I confess the pitiless tonic and dominant (with the sub-dominant arriving like the breeze at dawn in India, long awaited) has on me a somewhat enervating effect of which I am properly ashamed, because for some reason we are always all supposed to "adore" eighteenth-century triteness while despising it nearer our own

time. The four-minute duet "Lo consoco" at the end of side 1 and Uberto's aria, "I am imbroiled", on side 2, strike me as the best things and best done in this conscientious performance. I cared less for Serpina's "A Serpina penserete" which tends to hardness and lacks charm. The balance of the forces is good and the reproduction is verisimilitude itself. They are "in the room with you". P.H.-W.

#### VERDI. *Aida*.

Aida **Zinka Milanov** (sop.)  
 Amneris **Fedora Barbieri** (mezzo-sop.)  
 Radames **Jussi Björling** (ten.)  
 Amonasro **Leonard Warren** (bar.)  
 Ramfis **Boris Christoff** (bass)  
 The King of Egypt **Plinio Clabassi** (bass)

A Messenger **Mario Carlin** (ten.)  
 Priestess **Bruna Rizzoli** (sop.)  
**Orchestra and Chorus of the Opera House, Rome**, conducted by **Jonel Perlea**. Chorus Master: **Giuseppe Conca**. H.M.V. ALP 1388-90 (three 12 in., 118s. 10½d.). Recorded in the Opera House, Rome.  
 Erede Serafin (12/52) LXT2735-7 (1/56) 38CX1318-20

Whatever your neighbours may think, constant comparative playings of *Aida* are unusually instructive. There are two LP versions (one with Tebaldi and Del Monaco on Decca, under Erede; and one with Callas and Tucker under Serafin on Columbia, the latter enjoying the same Amneris as here and with a genuine Italian Amonasro Gobbi, as opposed to Warren in this new set). This Victor set has been some while a-coming, which always stokes up critical expectations, so that one has to make special efforts to avoid being disappointed if it turns out not all that optimism led you to hope.

I also carry about in mind memories of many wonderful "live" *Aidas*, and do not by any means rule out the Nile Scene as done by Rethberg, Martinelli and De Luca or the three sets on 78s, Columbia with Arrangi-Lombardi in the name role and H.M.V. with Gianini, Cataneo, Pertile and Inghileri. There was in my view a decided falling off in the "war-time" H.M.V. *Aida* (Caniglia, Stignani, Gigli and Bechi under Serafin): in interpretation. In the flesh, all these artists gave, I know, great performances, but apart from Stignani they are not at their artistic best on disc.

For the capturing of sound and reproduction the latest version listed above is the best to date: or so I have found. It is extremely natural sounding, full, resonant but quite without distortions and the singers don't seem too close as they do in Columbia's Nile Scene. Mme Milanov's many beautiful soft high notes (which one was beginning to think no *Aida* attempted any more, despite Tebaldi's good contribution) are caught floating, so to speak. It is that—the sailing, seraphic high piano of the eponymous heroine, which next in order seems to me to commend the issue. If Callas was more of an actress, she was much less steady as a singer; and both times the "Nuni pieta del mio soffir" phrases are done by Milanov

with more quality than Tebaldi. In the duet with Amonasro that crucial lament "O patria, patria quanto mi costi?" is exquisitely done and even though my impression was that *this Aida* was thinking more of her singing method than of her country, I do prefer that to Callas who, rapt in imaginative intensity in the significance of the words, allowed a zagging beat to invade the magic of the phrase. Also in the last duet Milanov really does seem like an angel as the tenor says she does. It is a joy to be able to report *piano* held, pearly notes joined by a perfectly sustained legato.

If that was all the story! But while it is the best of Mme Milanov there is also a worst. Frankly, some of the time, and especially when the music hots up in duets and ensembles, she will suddenly sound her age (which is greater than that of Callas or Tebaldi) and cause us to feel that at any moment she may throw up the sponge. Her start in Act 1 and even parts of "Ritorna vincitor" are laboured: in her big scene with her rival and again in the two strenuous duets by the Nile she is overtaxing herself. Once she makes a mistake in the first part of "Su dunque" and her cries of horror when her father breaks the bad news to her are strange dowager hoots: but these are failings on what I feel to be a beautiful whole. If Callas's production does not worry you, you may well still prefer her—for her phrasing is very musicianly, whereas Milanov's is often more merely prima donna-ish, but at her best she sings superbly (I am not suggesting that these were dubbed in afterwards, but now that our confidence has been shaken in this matter it would not really surprise me to learn that she had gone over her performance and re-done any solo bits where she had felt a bit "puffed" or harrassed at the actual general performance).

But glories and weaknesses summed up, I do think her a finer *Aida* than either Tebaldi or Callas, with more variety, quality and tonal allure, even if no more drama, than either of those ladies and something which at its best takes us right back to singers like Rethberg or Destinn.

Next on the list is the mezzo Barbieri, also in the Columbia set and obviously the best of current interpreters of the role. Honours are easy here, then. For sheer beefiness, staying power and a rich and menacing contrast to the womanly *Aida* she is about all you could possibly want (unless you demand subtlety in Amneris, I don't, B flats and stamina being more important and also irreplaceable—as anyone who has endured a ladylike or "artistic but old" Amneris will agree). The voice is more contralto-coloured than Stignani's and without denigrating that fine singer, I think we have now found a successor no less gorgeous.

For Radames I have a weakness still for Columbia's Tucker, though he loses quality on lower notes. Del Monaco was fine in the fiery bits of the Nile scene on Decca, but downright appalling, in my opinion, in "Celeste Aida", which I wouldn't sit through again if I could help it. At least Björling never falls below a certain distinction of style, but I may as well say



frankly (as a great admirer) that I was a little disappointed in him once or twice. His voice is in average shape, but not at its vital best (that silver trumpet we heard in his Manrico at Covent Garden in the 1930's). He needs a lot of effort to manage some of his high notes and though he warms up, getting better and better as the opera proceeds, he is not quite the ringing, passionate ultra-heroic Radames of one's dreams. All the same, for those who put phrasing first, he must be the most musically Radames since Martinelli, and if you think how rare it is, in the flesh at even the greatest opera houses of the world, to hear the part not absolutely murdered from end to end, you'll be very unlikely to complain except as a luxury about anything that Björling does. It's only for faint regrets about what he doesn't do (e.g. a perfectly poised, dreamy close to "Celeste Aida") that I raise any doubts at all.

Warren, solid and sturdy baritone though he be, must I think yield to Gobbi (Columbia), whose whole conception of the part, if not better sung, *qua* vocalisation, was far more alive dramatically (compare the Act 2 "Anch'io pugnai" or the Act 2 duet at the words "Pensa che un popolo..."). But he is better than Decca's Protti. Christoff is of course an immensely dramatic Ramfis, but he should try to sing the part as Pinza used to—with an absolutely true "line". A high priest who sings off key and blusters forfeits respect.

The orchestral playing is of fine quality without, strings apart, astonishing us by its beauty; pure poetry is not coaxed out of the Egyptian night, nor is our hair set upright in the Act 2 ensemble. The chorus is satisfactory. Maestro Perlea is accommodating but less easy going than Erede, more flexible and less stately than Serafin, quick to take advantage of the thrilling chance, the slight crescendo or real *slancio*. But he is no Toscanini, nor Beecham, nor—in the *Guerra* chorus, for instance—as exciting as Barbirolli.

All in all, for modern recording, reproduction, solo contributions (with exceptions to prove the rule) and value, this is the best complete *Aida* to date. P.H.-W.

#### VERDI. II Trovatore.

Manrico **Mario del Monaco** (ten.)  
The Count di Luna

**Ugo Savarese** (bar.)

Ferrando **Giorgio Tozzi** (bass)

Leonora **Renata Tebaldi** (sop.)

Azucena

**Giulietta Simionato** (mezzo-sop.)

Ruiz **Athos Cesarini** (ten.)

An old Gipsy **Antonio Balbi** (bar.)

A Messenger **Athos Cesarini** (ten.)

Inez **Luisa Maragliano** (sop.)

**Chorus of the Maggio Musicale**

**Fiorentino, L'Orchestre du Grand**

**Théâtre de Genève** conducted by

**Alberto Erede.** Decca LXT5260-2

(three 12 in., 118s. 10½d.).

Cellini (3/54) (H)ALP1112-3

Superior persons may smile at *Trovatore* but it is usually an affectionate smile. A glance at the repertory of any opera house in the world will show that after more than

100 years this archetypic Verdi opera holds its place in popular affection undiminished. How few the boring moments, how vital the ideas, what a spring of melody; no wonder such music conquers each successive generation.

For those making a first LP *Trovatore* investment, the new Decca version which is very loud, full and lusty, will make a strong appeal. But the H.M.V. version of March 1954 takes a lot of beating. Let me remind you. It went onto four sides without missable cuts: it had a fine cast of the international kind, not incomparable with the sort of star cast of the Rethberg-Martinelli era, with a fine chorus (the Robert Shaw Chorale) and Milanov Barbieri, Björling and Warren; and though Cellini was not the ideal conductor the whole set still sounds both distinguished and vivid.

The present Decca set takes six sides and includes such things usually omitted as the duet for soprano and tenor after "Ah si ben mio", the repeat of "Di quella pira" linked by half a dozen bars for Leonora and also in the last act her "Tu vedrai che amore" after the Miserere Scene. The music is wider spread: we are only at the end of "Di tal amor" at the end of side one (not at the end of the act as on H.M.V.) and turn-overs seem to multiply; for instance, side four starts by finishing up the Convent Scene with the soaring reprise of the heroine's "Can I believe . . .?", etc.; then comes Act 3, Scene 1; then Scene 2 but only up to the end of "Ah si ben mio". Then we turn over again to finish the act. Rather irritating! The chorus is not quite so good in discipline here; and the conductor Erede, who has great merits all the same, does not to my liking dig into the music with enough fire or feeling (e.g., at the swing into the major of Azucena's "Giorni poveri" in Act 3, Scene 1, at the words "qual per esso provo amore"—always a test point). On the other hand, he does not hurry or lose command. The powerful voices seem to me a little too near sometimes, to the detriment of the balance with the orchestra, but that may be liked in some quarters—after all one goes to this opera to get a dinning in the ears! A faint *Trovatore* were an absurdity. All the same I liked the more gentlemanly singing style generally adopted in the H.M.V. set. It was more like boxing by Queensberry Rules whereas much of this is more like all-in wrestling. But as to the cast, I don't pretend to lay down the law on tastes. Warren seemed to me a better Di Luna than Savarese who is rougher but has the advantage of seeming to "live" the words which Warren (with his interjection of "Io scemo" instead of "Io tremo" at a crucial moment!) did not. As Azucena on the other side of this tormented family, Simionato is much more a soprano in quality than the mezzo Barbieri—with all that this implies in a lack of contrast with Leonora but with a wonderful ease in the extended top of the role; she is very good but less beefy: it is a matter of taste which you think the better. In the tenor bout, Björling is more the stylist but Del Monaco singing, by the way, with far more polish

than sometimes, is the more elemental, Italian and stunning in his big blows. Not a gentleman-troubadour but a terrific warrior.

Between the two Leonoras I find it hard to choose. Milanov, very much the great lady, did quite ravishingly beautiful things, e.g., in the recitative and introduction to "D'amor sull' ali" but sounded a bit "pushed" sometimes. Tebaldi sings "Tacea la notte" so poetically that one overlooks her only competent and rather laboured "Di tal amor" after it. She is unfailingly generous and confident in the most strenuous passages, and though she does not soar to such angelic piano high notes as Milanov—and indeed with such a soprano-sounding Azucena seems not quite a high enough voice for all purposes, she never suggests that she is near flagging; her Death Scene is wonderfully beautiful. Her enunciation of Italian, perfectly reproduced by the recording, is a joy in itself.

On balance then, I find the new Decca slightly more exciting in an animal way (the point of the opera, really) as far as the soloists go (but not the chorus and conductor) while reserving a personal preference for the stylishness of much of the older set. Those who know their Verdi on LP will be able to see, on paper, the difference: for those coming new to the choice, the advice is to try out bits of both if possible. It is an exhilarating experience. P.H.-W.

**CHINESE OPERA. The Court of the Phoenix.** Hou Tai Tchuen (so-na solo). **The White Serpent.** Tu Chin-Fang (The White Lady). Yeh Sheng-Lan (Hui Sien). **Moonlight on the Springtime River Chang Yu-Tien** (p'i-p'a solo). **The Farewell to the Favourite.** Tchao Wen-Kouei (The King of Tch'ou), Tu Chin-Fang (The Favourite). **The Return of the Fishermen.** Yoa I Te (tseng solo). **The Three Scourges.** Tchao Wen-Kouei (Tcheou Tch'ou), Li Tson-Yi (The Old Man). **Song of the Yunnan Province.** Chang Chia-Ling (soprano). **Dance to a Drum.** Houan Kuai Ti (orchestra conductor). **Official Ensemble of the Chinese People's Republic from the Peking Opera.** Columbia 33CCX3 (12 in., 39s. 7½d. with booklet). Available to Special Order only. Recorded in France in conjunction with the 2nd International Festival of Dramatic Art.

The Peking Opera Company's visit to London last year aroused much interest, but left most of us with only a superficial knowledge of the many conventions of its musical art. We were so taken with the jugglers, the acrobats, the dancers and the novelty of the general presentation that details of the music itself were inevitably often overlooked; so that this record (made on the occasion of the company's visit to Paris) should prove absorbing to all interested in Chinese culture.

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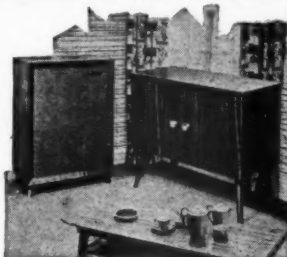


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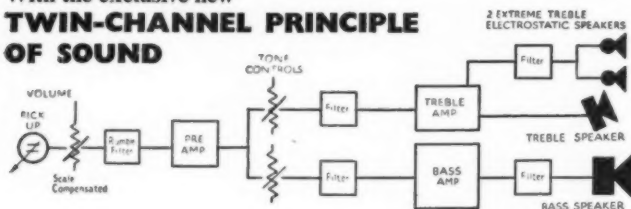
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of the connoisseurs arrive) of three operas—*The White Serpent*, *The Farewell to the Favourite*, and *The Three Scourges*. Without question, these will be hard for the uninitiated to accept: the endless vocal-and-instrumental monody, the lack of dynamic shadings, the stylisation, and not least the bizarre vocal timbre of the actors and the (to Western ears) upsetting slow wide vibrato (or is it intended as a kind of trill?) on every long note—all this is unlikely to make much appeal at first. Even the useful notes in a well-produced pamphlet available with the disc can do no more than explain the song-and-speech conventions to us without necessarily persuading us.

But start, instead, with the non-operatic music on this record, and you will find appreciation much easier. There is, for example, an immediately attractive traditional song from the Yunnan province sung by a soprano with more "Western" voice production. There are (my own favourites) three instrumental solos: one, descriptive of the birds in the forest, on the *so-na* (a quacking high-pitched oboe); a fifteenth-century air on the *p'i-p'a* (a kind of large mandoline), accompanied in unison by a flute and an *erh-hu* (two-stringed viol); and a seventeenth-century air for *erh-hu* and *tseng* (13-string psaltery). These are valuable authentic recordings of instruments scarcely represented in our catalogues: a pity that there could not also have been an example of what *Time Magazine* called the "super mouth-organ", the *sheng*. And there is, finally, a dance for orchestra at the end of side 2 which, after so much monody, suddenly sounds completely Wardour Street: from which I can only conclude that one acquires the taste for this exotic idiom so quickly that a more Western sound comes as something of a let-down. Try it yourself, and see. P.B.

**VERDI. Prelude; Ecco l'orrido campo; Ma dall' arido** (Act 2); **Morrò, ma prima in grazia** from "Un Ballo in Maschera", Act 3. **Teneste la promessa; Addio del passato** from "La Traviata", Act 3. **Pace, pace, mio Dio** from "La Forza del Destino", Act 4. **Ritorna vincitor!**; **L'insana parola** (Act 1); **Qri Radamès verrà; Oh, patria mia** from "Aida", Act 3. **Sul fil d'un soffio etesio** from "Falstaff", Act 3, part 2. **Tacea la notte placida** (Act 1); **Timor di me?; D'amor sull' ali rosee** from "Il Trovatore", Act 4. **Joan Hammond** (soprano), **Philharmonia Orchestra** conducted by **Glauco Curjel**. H.M.V. ALP1407 (12 in., 39s. 7½d.). Sung in Italian.

Last month Miss Hammond gave the Puccini favourites the works in English—with, as I said, a good deal of artistry. This month she does the same for the Verdi favourites—in Italian, thus coming into open competition with the Signoras X, Y and Z, and perhaps especially with Signora Stella whose flaccid, sumptuous anthology I also reviewed last month. At her best Miss Hammond is a good Verdian soprano with the right kind of "top" and all-it-takes dramatically. But her performances

of Verdi seem to vary enormously: her Willow Song, for instance, was a disappointment to me, whereas her *Don Carlos* prayer and her recent "O patria mia" (also on LP) were distinguished by any standard.

The best in this collection is "D'amor sull' ali rosee", it comes just before the Miserere Scene in *Il Trovatore* and Miss Hammond phrases it most beautifully, with floated and finely graded tone; she can stand comparison with Tebaldi or Milanov in this aria. But the earlier *Trovatore* aria, "Tacea la notte" she made rather better some time back in English on a plum label, and as for the cabaletta, "Di tal amor", which follows it (and which she wisely avoided before) this, alas, shows just how the role of Leonora is really beginning to slip out of the grasp of modern sopranos. Miss Hammond makes much more of a showing in it than the pitiable effort by Stella and tries to get her voice moving at the right speed and with the right agility (which is also a strain for Tebaldi and Milanov), but one can hardly call the results satisfactory. Working backwards again, Nanetta's fairy song rather lacks charm as done here; the held high notes, so important to the scheme, are admirably steady but it wouldn't be Miss Hammond's version if there were not also the occasional sudden bulge of tone. The *Aida* excerpts slightly disappoint; although the confidence of the dramatic high notes pleases, Miss Hammond sustains an attack of what I shall call vocal croquet through such passages as "o verdi prati . . . etc", delivering a series of adroit vocal taps and ricochets rather than pointing the phrase.

On the other side, the curiosity is her reading of the letter before "Addio del passato" (*Traviata*), with a strong—as it sounds to me—Australian accent coming through the Italian: the aria proper is somewhat jerky but good, without squeezing or the shrilling which so many modern Italian Violettas indulge in. The only thing that strikes me is that it is a little fierce; is not Violetta supposed to be resigned to her fate? Miss Hammond seems to be defying it. "Pace pace", if not always perfectly neat in phrasing is remarkably idiomatic Verdi for a foreigner and for those who like Miss Hammond's voice, I should say a great treat: likewise the long Gibbet Scene and the plea to Renato from *Ballo*.

The conductor's tempi are on the slow and cautious side but the playing of the orchestra is beautiful and the balance of voice and accompaniment is satisfying.

In a sum, a Verdi concert which can be recommended with not many qualifications to Miss Hammond's admirers, and one which those who do not especially respond to her voice or singing style may still find quite interesting or at times impressive. P.H.W.

#### Audition Facilities.

In an effort to provide better listening facilities Thomas Heinitz of 29 Colville Road, London, W.11, is inaugurating a series of Saturday record recitals, commencing on November 10th. Using good quality reproducing equipment the recitals will be held at the above address between 10 a.m. and 12 noon and 2 p.m. and 4 p.m.

## POETRY AND DICTION, ETC.

### SHERIDAN. The School for Scandal.

Sir Peter Teazle Cecil Parker  
Sir Oliver Surface Balliol Holloway  
Joseph Surface Harry Andrews  
Charles Surface Alec Clunes  
Lady Teazle Claire Bloom  
Lady Sneerwell Dame Edith Evans  
Mrs. Candour Athene Seyler  
William Squire, Michael Gough,  
George Howe, Peter Williams,  
Peter Halliday and Anne Leon.  
With incidental music from the Symphonies of William Boyce. Columbia 33CX1387, 33CX1388-9 (three 12 in., 105s.).

This is a good presentation of the whole play—minus quite a few (but undamaging) cuts and the occasional substitution of a proper name for a pronoun or a mild audible cue in place of a visual one. If the full flavour of the Screen Scene cannot in the nature of the exercise come to us as strongly as if we were seeing as well as hearing it, the general tenor of the play, the characterisation and the delightful spirited interplay of the comedy all come over very happily—without false emphasis. The opening with Dame Edith Evans and Michael Gough as Snake sets a good pace and it all bowls along, but not too fast, not at any exaggerated crackjack speed. Of the brothers—and when one speaks of Surfaces in connection with these discs one means Joseph and Charles and nothing technical, though it may be said that the engineering is silent and quite unobtrusive—it is Alec Clunes as Charles who sounds the most at home in this world, though Harry Andrews does not drop any points. Athene Seyler's Mrs. Candour is magnificently keen and avid and the great scene of gossip (Act 2, Scene 2) where all reputations are quizzed is superbly funny—the first band of side 2 is almost a conversation piece on its own, the quintessence of Sheridan. It made me laugh aloud, alone. William Squire, Dame Edith and Miss Seyler are all at the top of their form and only the two younger ladies sound a shade too modern in their cast of speaking. The first disc, by the way, manages to take Act 1, Scene 1, Sir Peter's soliloquy and the news brought by Rowley, and the first scene of Act 2—a generous helping. The screen scene comes on side 4 and Claire Bloom as Lady Teazle brought back to finer feelings is admirable in her sincerity: in triumph, she is apt to squeal a little. As Sir Peter, too, Cecil Parker excellently gives the effect of the *coup* of the falling screen, by voice alone. Lady Sneerwell's unmasking and male-diction are also splendid, but I think it would have been better to dispense with the little jig by Boyce at the end and keep in Charles as the end of the play; instead of

Favourite Music of

**Eric Coates**

CHARLES MACKERRAS  
and London Symphony Orchestra

**COLUMBIA** 38S1092 (LP)



stopping at Sir Peter's "And may you live as happily together as Lady Teazle and I intend to do". However, as I said, the six sides deliver up a wonderful tonic, sound picture of the comedy; the producer should be allowed to take a bow. P.H.-W.

**A NATURAL CHILDBIRTH.** A documentary record of the birth of a baby conducted by Dr. Grantley Dick Read. Argo RG100 (12 in., 39s. 7½d.).

This is a recording of a twelve-hour labour and represents a sincere attempt by Dr. Dick Read and the Argo Company, in condensing this into fifty minutes' playing time, still to convey the true "atmosphere" and the stages of a natural labour to its successful conclusion.

I feel it is an impossible task for, even with the severe cutting necessary, the record is repetitive and tedious to listen to. A young woman shortly to have her first baby who listened to it with me had the same feeling. What the notes on the cover describe as one of the outstanding moments towards the end of the first side—the recording of the baby's heart sounds—I think rather pointless and even frightening. The notes also state that during the final stages a small incision was made and that the patient did not feel this nor request any anaesthetic. Unfortunately this does not appear in the recording.

However, if the record helps to propagate the truth that childbirth is and should be regarded as a natural process to be conducted whenever possible in the patient's own home, it will do a most useful service.

The quality of the recording is good and Dr. Dick Read's voice most persuasive and reassuring—almost hypnotic.

"A DOCTOR".

## CLASSICAL REISSUES

### VOCAL

One of the curses of being a record reviewer is that, busy with the vain attempt to keep up with new issues, one has too little time to play the sets one knows one likes. The H.M.V. *Boris Godunov* records have been resting for far too long on my shelves; it was real pleasure that the monthly task should have involved settling down to a rehearing of at any rate several extracts. This "Great Scenes from *Boris Godunov*" record is H.M.V. ALP1323. Since it's rather hard from the label to discover just what it is on it, I make no apologies for a rather detailed listing.

The first extract is the complete Coronation Scene: the bells of Moscow ringing, Shuisky's exhortation (André Bielecki), the "Slava" chorus, Boris's speech, the bells and the chorus again. A fine introduction to a "potted" version of the opera. After this the people, who, some claim, are the real protagonists of the opera, appear no more on the disc. We deal with the soloists. Incidentally, this is the only version of the Coronation scene available outside the sets, since the Chaliapin disc disappeared.

Rather surprisingly, Pimen's aria, "One more page" (I often feel like Pimen when press-day draws near), has been omitted—

surprisingly, since other set-pieces on the disc, Vaarlam's Song, and the Death and Farewell of Boris, are already available in Christoff versions, while that excellent little 78 of Pimen's aria (DA1938) has been deleted. But the extract that has been chosen from the Monastery scene makes a good effect. It starts with the last two lines of Pimen's first speech, "But day is near, the lamp is burnt out". The off-stage chorus steals in quietly; Grigory (Nicolai Gedda) awakes, musing on his dream of glory. Five lines of Grigory are then cut—those in which he tenderly watches the industrious Pimen—and then the extract runs to the end of the scene with just one, substantial cut—19 lines, and those the important ones in which Pimen's less studious youth is recalled. But the atmosphere of the scene comes over very well, with the matins bell, the distant choir, the discordant emotions stirring in the young monk. What a magnificent conductor Issay Dobrowen was! How thrillingly the first statement of the "Tsarevich" theme blazes out. How excitingly the strings strike into the quiet chorus, to herald Grigory's menacing apostrophe of Boris!

The first side closes with Vaarlam's Song and the Clock Scene (from "Ouf! I need air" to the end of the act). Christoff's performance of the monologue is exemplary. No carbon copy of Chaliapin's, but an individual, restrained (here) and deeply moving realisation. This is the only Clock Scene currently available outside the sets.

A perhaps over-generous amount of the second side has been devoted to the Polish act. First, Marina's mazurka aria, "Ah, poor Marina. Ah! how dull life is!". Rather dull singing, too, from Eugenia Zareska (surely we overrated her contribution when the set first came out?). Then the polonaise with chorus from the Fountain Scene, the dialogue between Grigory and Marina, through to the Fountain Duet and the end of the act. Readers may like to be reminded that the Sadoven/Nagachevsky disc of this duet, in which that delectable Russian tone squeezes out like brilliantine from a tube, ought still to be available to special order, H.M.V. EK94.

Finally we have the Farewell and Death of Boris, magnificently sung by Christoff, with meaning in the utterance of every word. But here the editing presents some very curious features. The extract starts quite early in the scene, with "I have summoned you, boyars". It runs to the entrance of Pimen, but the first 12 lines of Pimen's narration are cut, so that he seems to be telling his own story, not relating one a shepherd told him. The slightly ill-managed moment when Boris-Christoff interrupts Pimen-Christoff sounds no happier than before—though for the sake of Christoff's fine singing the duplication of roles can be forgiven.

But then there are two unforgivable cuts in Boris's Farewell: the six lines in which he advises his son how to govern Russia (after six lines of the Farewell, there is a cut straight to "Cherish Xenia"—how tenderly Christoff sings the phrase): and then the last nine lines, in which Boris prays for his son, are gone too! (In the complete set, of course, there are none of these cuts.) This

ruthless surgery makes this a far from desirable version of the Farewell; it throws the whole thing out of shape. One could have understood a decision to leave out the Farewell altogether, since there is already a good recording of it; but to do this particular snipping to it makes no sort of sense. Why not apply scissors to the Polish scene, rather? However, for those who feel that they cannot run to the whole of the H.M.V. *Boris*, ALP1323 is well worth considering. The recording, where I have tested it against the complete set, is not quite so vivid, though it is still very good, and does ample justice to Dobrowen's unfailingly imaginative treatment of this great music.

On LXT5223-5, Decca have coupled *Cav.* and *Pag.* back-to-back and head-to-tail; side 1 of one backs side 3 of the other. A Mario del Monaco recital is dropped from the fourth side of each set. This brings it into line with the H.M.V. twin-set, without, I feel, offering it any serious competition.

LXT5220 is a 12-inch join-up of the two 10-inch Tebaldi recitals reviewed by me in April and by A.R. in July, containing the Mozart arias, and arias from *Adriana Lecouvreur*, *La Wally*, *Lodoletta*, *Tell* and *Cecilia*.

H.M.V.'s potted *Rigoletto* (ALP1392) is rather enjoyable; it opens with great verve on the high-spirited dance music at rise of curtain, goes through "Questa o quella" (Jan Peerce), and cuts after the first strain of the subsequent minuet. Then comes "Pari siamo", done by Leonard Warren correctly, in fine voice, but without much variety of tone-colour. This goes straight into "Figlia!... Mio padre!", which cuts off at a ridiculous place, *Rigoletto's* "A te che importa?"; presumably this morsel was included to give us Gilda's Traviata-like phrases, rather beautifully done by Erna Berger. The *Rigoletto/Gilda* duet is skipped, and we go to "Giovanna, ho dei rimorsi", the Duke's entrance, and "E il sol dell'anima". The stretto of the Duke is gone, however, and we jump to "Gautier Maldé... Caro nome", which is fresh and clean. The first side ends with "Ella mi fu rapita... Parmi veder", which Peerce does with spirit but little feeling for shaping a phrase beautifully.

Side 2 has *Rigoletto's* entrance and "Cortigiani", then "Tutte le feste" and "Solo per me l'infamia" (though not "Sì, vendetta"). The next band runs from the beginning of Act 3 to the end of a loud, ringing "La donna è mobile"; then the Quartet (starting at "Bella figlia", and without the introductory exchanges, "Un dì, si ben rammentomi", into which Nan Merriman put much character). And finally "Lassù in cielo", actually starting a few lines earlier at "V'ho ingannato".

The orchestral playing is clean and lively, the recording is excellent, and the singing is better than most of what we hear today. But how attractive it would be if H.M.V. invited some connoisseur to pick his "dream performance" of *Rigoletto* from the racks at Hayes—not necessarily going right back into pre-electric recordings, but



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drawing by William Crampton



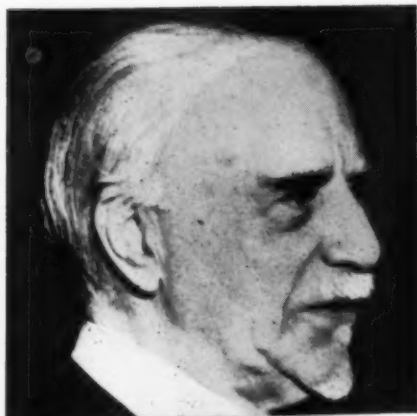
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*The Ninth Symphony was recorded in Vienna, and the photograph shows von Karajan discussing the score with the four notable soloists during a recording session; from left to right: Marga Höffgen (partially obscured), von Karajan, Elisabeth Schwarzkopf, Otto Edelmann and Ernst Häfliger.*

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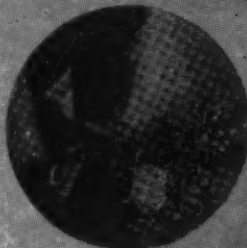
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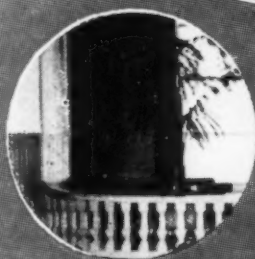
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Peg o' my heart; Goodbye Blue 33S1104

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with Jack Byfield, piano  
and Reginald Kilbey, 'cello  
Roses from the South;  
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Jeannie with the light brown hair;  
Fascination; I love the moon;  
Softly awakes my heart and  
Grand March ("Samson and Delilah");  
Desert Song; Violin Song from "Tina";  
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calling on Schipa, De Luca, Galli-Curci. In America, Victor have made up a composite *Aida* in this way, and very enjoyable it is. Single arias on 45 would be even better; but if we are to have potted one-disc operas, then why not use the best of the past, especially now that the admirable CSLP series has been started?

It will be seen from the listing above that the topping and tailing of some of the extracts is rather peculiar: with a little more care, some of the missing "highlights" could have been got in. These are: the Rigoletto/Sparafucile duet, "Deh non parlare", the strettetto of the Duke/Gilda duet, "Si, vendetta", the Storm Trio, and perhaps the two choruses.

The potted *Lucia di Lammermoor* (Columbia 33CX1385) is rather less enjoyable. Fascinating, amazing artist though Callas is, her timbre is here so dark and clouded with tragic overtones that she seldom suggests Donizetti's heroine. The extracts are five long ones: "Regnava nel silenzio . . . Quando rapito in estasi"; "Sulla tomba", the love duet in *extenso*; "Il pallor funesto", the duet between her, Lucia and her brother; "Dov'è Lucia?", leading into the Sextet; and the Mad Scene, complete. Callas's best moment comes in the last section of the Act 2 duet, "Tu che vedi", where her rather lachrymose tones are in character, and where she is distinctly moving. Di Stefano is the Edgardo, Gobbi the Enrico, and one Valiano Natali the very loud Arturo Buklaw. I wish Parlophone would consider looking out the best of their 78 set with Pagliughi for reissue.

#### ORCHESTRAL

Beethoven's "Eroica" Symphony with the Concertgebouw Orchestra under Kleiber, Decca LXT5215, is a remake with a new catalogue number of an old LP, reviewed in April, 1951, which was one of the first successes of the new medium. The performance is a splendid one that one can listen to again with renewed admiration for the Weingartnerish justness of tempi, the excellent balance of parts and of details, and the very fine orchestral playing. Since Kleiber's modern recording with the Vienna Philharmonic does not seem to have materialized, though announced and accorded a catalogue number (LXT5064), it is a good thing that his reading of the work should have been put on record in its most favourable light. The recording, though revived, cannot pretend to have the body of tone of such recent versions as Klemperer's, and accordingly it is recommended more particularly to those who want Kleiber's interpretation, and to students of Beethoven performance, than to general collectors simply looking for a satisfying "Eroica".

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and his  
Orchestra

**PARLOPHONE**

PHD1038 (LP)



which Messrs. Philips and Vox have hitherto been prominent. By and large the most recommendable version of the Grieg Piano Concerto has been Clifford Curzon's with the L.S.O. under Fistoulari—but many buyers must have been deterred by its spacious and expensive format, two 12-inch sides. Now—with, if anything, a gain in recorded quality—it has been fitted on to a single side, and has Curzon's most poetical account of Falla's *Nights in the Garden of Spain* (New Symphony Orchestra under Jorda) as its backing.

Philips have recut Paul van Kempen's version of Tchaikovsky's "Pathétique" Symphony with the Concertgebouw Orchestra (ABL3127) so that the break does not fall in the middle of a movement; there are now two movements per side. The Pye Group, who have taken over the Mercury catalogue from Oriole, reissue what we

used to know as MG40002 as MRL2507. This contains Barber's *School for Scandal Overture*, Adagio for Strings and First Essay for Orchestra, backed by Morton Gould's Latin-American Symphonette, all played by the Eastman-Rochester Symphony Orchestra under Howard Hanson. M.M. provided a full review in June, 1954.

Mitropoulos's outstandingly brilliant version of the Polovtsian Dances from *Prince Igor*, with the New York Philharmonic-Symphony, is separated from Ippolitov-Ivanov's *Caucasian Sketches* and presented on its own, with great success, on a 45 extended-play, Philips ABE10011. Columbia SEL1547 collects three operatic intermezzos in Karajan's swagger performance with the Philharmonia: the *Méditation* from *Thais*, the *Tales of Hoffman* Barcarolle, and the Act 4 Entr'acte from *Carmen*. A.P.

## NIGHTS AT THE ROUND TABLE

By W. A. CHISLETT

"Your Musical Holiday in Mexico" is the title of an extremely pleasant record made by **Pepe Gonzalez and his Orchestra** (Bruns. LAT8128). Pepe Gonzalez is the *nom de plume* adopted by a leading conductor of symphonic music in Central and South America who is trying his hand at popular music for the first time, and so successfully that Kostelanetz may well have to look to his laurels. The orchestra sounds at times to be of almost conventional symphonic proportions and at other times like a large samba band. The recording is good with echo chamber effect well in evidence but some top cut is necessary to tame the ferocity of the strings. About half of the twelve titles are well known, such as *Marchita*, *La Paloma*, the irresistible *Mexican Hat Dance* and *Estrellita*, and the rest, some of which are traditional, I have not previously heard. All are attractive in their different ways and the arrangements are interesting and in most cases luscious. All in all then a desirable disc.

A second record in the new Brunswick "Musical Holiday" series takes us to Barcelona and here we hear a band of very different composition. It is a "Cobla", consisting of normal trumpets, trombone and bass with a *flabiol* (a small three-holed flute), two *tiples* (strident sounding members of the clarinet family), two *tenors* (oboes of sorts with an astonishingly powerful and penetrating tone) and two *fliscorns* (instruments which are akin to the flugelhorn of our brass bands). This description makes the band sound to be a noisy and strident affair, and it is; but it is peculiarly suited to the native dance music which it plays. Interspersed with the eleven scrolls played by the **Cobla Barcelona** are three sung by the **St. Jordi Choir** and two in which the **Esbart Verdguer** (Folk Dancers) join in. I can assure readers that there is nothing monotonous in the complete selection. The variety is infinitely greater than I expected (LAT8136).

On the other hand I find that "The Joys and Sorrows of Andalusia" on Ducretet-Thomson TKL93109 is a little monotonous despite the magnificently virtuosic guitar playing of **Luis Maravilla**. The monotony is due more to the singer, **Pepe Valencia**, but it is only fair to confess that I am allergic to the whining quality assumed by many of these Spanish singers of the flamenco and its allies.

In "Music from Vienna" Delysé reintroduce

an orchestra which many will remember with affection for its work during the first two or three years of the war when it relieved the gloom of the blackout so often. It is now called **Leslie Bridgewater and his Orchestra**, but it is virtually the B.B.C. Salon Orchestra, last heard in 1942. I should have liked a few more strings and less mustel organ, and this may perhaps be considered for future recordings. Of the quality of the orchestra it is enough to say that in its ranks are **Jean Pougnet**, **Frederick Riddle**, **Anthony Pini** and **Leon Goossens** among other well-known names. The programme is devoted to Johann and Josef Strauss, one side to each, and I am particularly glad to have the second side for Josef is unfairly neglected in favour of his elder brother. Mr. Bridgewater unearthed in Vienna some time ago a big pile of their music, some of which can rarely have been heard in England. A few samples are included here along with some established favourites. It was, I think, a mistake to include *Vienna Woods* in Walter's arrangement when there are available excellent recordings of full dress performances including the so important zither in the overture and coda (EK2123).

The steady increase in the multitudinous recordings of the more popular Strauss waltzes, etc., in LP form makes choice more and more difficult. An extremely good selection called "Irresistible Strauss", played by the **Philharmonia Orchestra** under **Karajan** on Col. 33CX1303, contains *The Gypsy Baron Overture*, *Delirium Waltz*, *Artist's Life Waltz*, *Emperor Waltz*, *Pizzicato Polka* and *Blue Danube Waltz*. Five of the six are already available in fine recordings, but the delightful *Delirium*, which is by Josef, is a first recording. I wish that this could be obtained separately, but in the meantime this selection ranks with the very best of the previous recordings.

Johann Strauss is also to be found, together with his legitimate successors, Lehar, Kalman and Künneke, in "Vienna in Song" on Philips SBR6203. The operettas included are Strauss's *Fledermaus* and *A Night in Venice*, Lehar's *Frederica*, *Land of Smiles* and Paganini, Kalman's *Circus Princess* and Künneke's *Cousin from Nowhere*. The soloists are **Walter Anton Dotzer** and **Ilena Steingruber** and the orchestra is the **Vienna Symphony** under **Heinz Sandhauser**. An agreeable selection

agreeably sung and well recorded; but, of course, some of the Lehar songs inevitably recall Tauber, a comparison with whom few can survive.

How often in these columns twenty-five and thirty years ago I lamented the necessity of listening to yet another *In a Persian Market* and *In a Monastery Garden*, but little then did I know of what I should be called upon to listen to in the years still to come! Here they are again and sounding very fresh as played by the Rochester "Pops" under **Morton Gould** on Philips NBE11045.

Four EPs of Greek music come from various members of the E.M.I. family, with four items on each. Parlophone contributes *Greek Kantathas and Tangos* and *Modern Greek Song-Dances* (CGEP24 and 25), H.M.V. *Modern Greek Folk Songs* (7EGC2) and *Columbia Popular Greek Songs* (SEGC12). The kantatha is a serenade type of composition and most of the examples in these records are Italianate in style, the tango is, to my ears, indistinguishable from those heard elsewhere, but the "modern" folk songs and dances are based on and in the rhythms of old traditional tunes. The accompaniments vary between a small band of the "schrammel" type to a mandoline orchestra. Many of these are both interesting and attractive and to those who wish to sample them I suggest first, in their quite different ways, SEGC12 and CGEP25.

The **Boston Promenade Orchestra** under **Arthur Fiedler** are disappointing in the Ballet Music from *Faust*. The playing is very business-like and matter of fact and the recording is not up to the quality we have come to expect today (H.M.V. 7EP7027).

An "International Carol Concert" by the **Obernkirchen Children's Choir** contains 13 carols or carol-like songs from seven countries. The choir includes both boys and girls and is virtuosic in quality but sings in a style and tradition quite different from English children's choirs. Not that it is any the worse for this but the fondness for spinning out finely the last

note of a verse or song on the slightest provocation palls after a time. Among the carols are two from Spain which are quite unfamiliar to me and which I fell for at first hearing. They are *Fum, Fum, Fum* and *El Pequeno Zagal* (Parlo. CPMD11).

A record that will please Mr. R. P. Seemungal of Port of Spain, who wrote at length in praise of **Miliza Korjus** in the May number of THE GRAMOPHONE, is a 45 EP of four of her popular songs—*Il bacio*, *Funiculi, Funicula*, *La Villanella* and *La Danza* (H.M.V. 7RP7028). I can go a long way with Mr. Seemungal in his enthusiasm for this singer, and the dubbings are very well done. No singer owes more to the gramophone than Miliza Korjus for she largely taught herself to sing by listening to records of great coloratura singers of the past and trying to imitate them, and it was on the evidence of her own records and without having heard her in the flesh that the late Irving Thalberg engaged her for "The Great Waltz".

Columbia 33SX1050 and 1051 provide an interesting opportunity of comparing first-class English and French bands. The **Coldstream Guards Band** under **Major D. A. Pope**, gives a mixed concert of solos, marches, etc., and the **Garde Républicaine Band** under **François-Julien Brun** plays a bunch of French marches on one side and American marches on the other. The great interest to me is the contrast between the two bands when playing Sousa. Apart altogether from bad microphone placing which gives undue prominence to some instruments (the piccolo in *Stars and Stripes* is made to sound absurd, for instance) the French band in striving for brilliance produces a tone that is unduly astringent and even acid at times and while this may be suitable for the French marches it does not sound at all like Sousa. The **Garde Républicaine** has always aimed at brilliance but I do not recall this acidity in the past, although it is some years since I heard them in the flesh.

which Les Paul scored a sensation with his guitar gimmick. Sullivan's record of his *GIN Mill Blues* deservedly stayed in the Parlophone catalogue for a long time and was always a collector's piece. Much as I admire the Tatums and Wilsons (Garland) of this world, here is the answer to any inverted apartheid when it comes to this type of piano playing. Anybody can enjoy this, and to those who know what it's all about and who have yet to discover Sullivan it will be a revelation. *Minor Mood*, for some reason, is based on the Rachmaninov Prelude (what again?), but no matter—the piece is completely original. Here is a touch from the 'thirties that can still teach something to the 'fifties.

Next **Steve Race**. This, surprisingly, is not a piano record. The billing is "Steve Race and his Tic Tac Men" (Polydor BM6034). Old time jazz, corn, the lot. You will know what to expect when I tell you that in the middle of *Wedding Bells* the cry goes up: "Let's sing another chorus". But this is something more than just a chorus record for the pub sing-song. On the back is *Glendora*, a near-hit, but surely this is the way to do it! Good clean fun, and, incidentally, good diction. That may not matter all that much, but poor diction has knocked a potential "choice" out of the panel, and this modest contribution has made it. Perhaps that doesn't matter either! If you don't like *Wedding Bells*, then you can have *Bicycle Bells*, a jolly piece and the kind of number that **Sidney Torch** always does supremely well. This is backed by John Addison's theme music for the film "Reach for the Sky". After the initial aeroplane noises you will get a true illusion (if that is possible!) of sitting in the cinema during the opening titles of a film (Parlophone R4198\*). On Polydor BM6032 **Geraldo** couples the theme from "The Proud Ones" with *Wedding Bell Polka*—a different wedding altogether.

Is it really perverse to choose from among the band records that by **Eric Delaney** playing *Ain't She Sweet* on Nixa N15069? There is a raucous interlude and a blaring coda, but the rest is delightful and extremely simple. In all the racket surrounding our lives to-day we are apt to forget the art that conceals art, the value of simplicity and other clichés. Anyway if you find this dull, you can amuse yourselves by working out a dance routine for the elegant adagio pair of your choice for next year's concert party. *Rocking the Tymps* is self-explanatory, a bad piece of coupling, for you cannot like both, and the days have gone by when people put up with one side for the sake of the other. In spite of that I have done it for this review. Then there is **Ambrose**. His new record is of *Get Happy* and *Slide Rule* on M.G.M. 930. These are slick and superbly done, and they pose, in another form, the question put by Mr. Appleby in the correspondence column last month. As the B.B.C. has proved over and over again the public has an insatiable appetite for nostalgia. Programmes like "These Radio Times" and "Scrapbook" always delight the Listener Research people. Now that a new generation has discovered Dixieland, it is almost time for a revival of the dance music of the 'thirties. I wonder how many Hylton and Ambrose titles you still have on your shelves if you are over thirty. There were some wonderful arrangers at work in those days, when front-rank

## MISCELLANEOUS AND DANCE By "HARLEQUIN"

An asterisk following a 78 r.p.m. number indicates its availability at 45 r.p.m. The numbers are the same with the addition of the prefix "45". Where the 45 r.p.m. number is different it is given immediately after the 78 r.p.m. number.

Mediocrity is the mark of the month, unless you have a passion for exotica, of which there are a number of authentic sounding records.

First, then, the best record that has been made of the best show that has come out of America since the war. It may seem odd at first sight to see the name of **Nelson Eddy** coupled with "Oklahoma". Mr. Eddy was a kind of Harry Welchman of the pre-war American musical stage and screen, though his records included bits of opera, including a memorable *Vision Fugitive*. Nevertheless, my friends, this is undoubtedly it. Further, Philips (BBL7114) have had the good sense not to turn this into a vehicle for him. This is, in fact, a recording of the complete score, including the only recording of *Lonely Room*, and the record has a genuine theatre atmosphere. Though Mr. Eddy is the star, those in support are admirable and the whole entertainment is superbly presented. I ought to add that the actual recording is immaculate! Do not think I have gone mad if I call this Rodgers and Hammerstein's "Elektra"! But, as with Strauss and Hofmannsthal, it was their first collaboration

and in its own way as important for the future if they have yet to produce their "Rosenkavalier" there is no doubt that "Oklahoma" has the vitality and the charm to stay the course. It was not only a landmark of the musical theatre; it is a splendid achievement, and this is the record to have. Where to find a comparable English revival? If all the multitude of Spanish zarzuelas on the English market have found customers, then surely some company might take a risk with one of the "Baddeley" entertainments. V. C. Clinton-Baddeley and Walter Leigh wrote "Jolly Roger" (Savoy 1934). This is comic opera rather than musical comedy. It ran long but was neglected by the gramophone except for a "Gems". Leigh, a pupil of Hindemith, was killed in the war. His serious output is represented (just) in the lists with his Concertino for Harpsichord or Piano and Strings, currently in the Boyd Neel repertory. Will nobody look at his theatre music? When the entire output of eighteenth century composers is put on to disc at enormous expense nobody can call this comparatively tiny request uneconomic.

Now for a possible cheat. A 12 inch LP of **Joe Sullivan** has been announced, and a bit of it in the shape of an EP (Bruno. OE9276) has come my way. Here are four of his own compositions, including *Little Rock Getaway*, with

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musicians, including symphony players, came into the sessions. Many years ago at the Royal College there was a String Quartet, made up of Jean Pougnet, Hugo Rignold, Harry Berly and Douglas Cameron. All except the last played with the bands of those days, and all were to gain fame in the legitimate world of music. I remember after the war when the Liverpool Phil. came to Manchester as the guest of the Hallé watching Jean Pougnet, who had just played a Mozart concerto, shake hands with Hugo Rignold, then conductor of the Liverpool orchestra, and reflecting on the contrast of that meeting with so many pre-war sessions with the big name bands. Musical illiteracy can make a big splash in jazz and is no bar to the most inspired improvisation, but what so many of us are missing in the popular music of to-day is, frankly, the presence of a musician. Of course, Ambrose is brilliant at these composed pieces, but if M.G.M. or anybody else would give him a free hand with a few carefully chosen current hits we might even find the top ten blasted off the page. I am old-fashioned enough to believe that some standards can be maintained even down here, and I do not believe it is necessary for popular entertainment to remain in the gutter. I say this to Ambrose, because he is about the only one left. The field is clear, the door is wide open, the sky's the limit, go in and win. Now listen to his old colleague **Ted Heath** on Decca F10783\* playing *Canadian Sunset* and *Oriental Holiday*. Brilliant in their way, but as soon as the music goes above *mf* all Hell is let loose and the recording shows it. The point is that this *always* happens. It is raucous, it blares, it distorts and it is hideous. Thousands of people like it that way and therefore it has to be done, but the public does not consist entirely of teen-agers recruited to kiss railway carriage windows. **Geoff Love** is more relaxed in *Canadian Sunset* on Oriole CB1335, backed by *When the Lilacs Bloom Again*. This tune used to be called *When the White Elder Tree Blooms Again*, in which guise it was a famous old Hylton concert record in about 1929. Now that the white elder tree has turned to lilac it has come round again and is obviously enjoying quite a vogue, for it appears again this month from **Billy Vaughn** with an *Autumn Concerto* on London HLD8319\*.

My fifth record is quite a novelty. Knowing something about steel bands (dustbin lids and all that) it was with some trepidation that I put on a record by **The Brute Force Steel Band**, playing, of all things, the famous old march *Under the Double Eagle*. In a charming announcement we are told that the band comes from Antigua, and then the most enchanting sounds occur. Mind you, it gets a bit monotonous after the first inch and three-eighths (as W.R.A. would say), but it is all as mild as milk. Even *Mambo Jambo* ambles along with decorum, though there are some tricky rhythms here (Parlo. DP157). The sound is not unlike that of a marimba, which you can test for yourself by playing *Everybody Loves Saturday Night* and *Zambesi* by **The Martin Slavin Marimba Sextet** on H.M.V. GV242. Digging among my own archives I unearthed a 1928 Polydor of the Excelsior Marimba Band of Guatemala, which was annotated: "the first marimba band to play in Europe"! Other exotica this month are on LP: **Franco El "G.5"** (that is what they are called) in "Tropicana" (Col. 33CS17), **Xavier Cugat** in "Merengue" on Philips BBL7110, **Arturo Ramirez** in "Dinner in Mexico" on Felsted PDL85011 and **Danny (Kahuawa) Stewart** in "Hawaiian Favourites" on London HAU2014. I have listened faithfully to all these and they each sound just the thing for those who enjoy this kind of music.

My last choice is of **Frank Baron** in "Melodies from the Eddy Duchin Story" on

M.G.M. CC1. Here it all is again, but with a difference in that an unspecified band suddenly bursts into the proceedings in the manner of the Surprise Symphony of Haydn to give a splendid performance of *Exactly Like You*. For the rest, Mr. Baron plays gently and attractively. Nothing startling here; just a pleasant record for a winter afternoon; if only all alleged records of "mood music" evoked so amiable a mood.

### THE MONTH'S CHOICE

Oklahoma  
Joe Sullivan  
Steve Race  
Eric Delaney  
Brute Force Steel Band  
Frank Baron

Philips BBL7114  
Bruns. OE9276  
Polydor BM6034  
Nixa N15069  
Parlo. DP157  
M.G.M. CC2

Well, there they are, but before taking a look round the remainder let us take a look at **Mel Tormé**, who has become immensely popular and recently topped a West End bill, having previously got no further West than Kilburn, and who appears this month on three labels and as many speeds. This is what he says: "I'm all for the futuristic singing of to-day, where the voice is used for improvisation, not merely to sing written choruses". Incidentally this is exactly what he does on his EP (M.G.M. EP562), but as the bulk of these titles were recorded in 1948 that is probably fair enough. To use the voice instrumentally is legitimate in jazz and in numbers like *Goody, Goody* (Vogue Q72185\*) and *Lullaby of Birdland* (London HLN8322\*) he is interesting and is assisted by a brilliant accompaniment—unidentified. His voice indeed is somehow right for George Shearing's cool *Lullaby*. *I Love to Watch the Moonlight*, on the reverse of this record, is also most originally done, but in my opinion this approach will hardly do for melodies like Gershwin's *Love is Here to Stay* on the Vogue record, or solid band numbers like *I Can't Give You Anything But Love* on M.G.M. 922\*, backed by *There's No Business Like Show Business*. This is an odd choice for him, and it is notable that he is materially helped by a chorus. Mel Tormé is a jazz singer if anything; dust numbers like this are best left to those who have a feeling for the theatre. This is a straight number if ever there was one! Mr. Tormé has provided enough material this month for a just verdict.

So round we go. **Bill McGuffie** plays *Piano Ballet* on Philips PB631. This really doesn't mean a thing—it ain't even got that swing, but it is none the less a pleasure to hear some honest piano playing, and the same goes for **Winifred Atwell** for her excellent *St. Louis Blues* on Decca F10785\*. No gimmicks here, but on the reverse she reverts to normal in *Bumble Boogie*—yes, poor old Rimsky! *The Bus Stop Song* is quite fun, though the title is irrelevant, sung by **Audrey Jeans** on F10788\* with *It's Better in the Dark*. **Alan Lomax** presents two good songs—potentially—on F10787\*. Unfortunately the diction is so poor as to almost put it out of count. *Hard Case* is about Dartmoor (the prison) and *Dirty Old Town* is a good corrective to moon-June romance. "I found my love by the gasworks. I dreamed a dream by the old canal, I kissed my girl by the factory wall"—well, isn't that the way it is with most of us? **Morris Stolfo** combines *Manhattan Romance* with *Sweet Sue* on Bruns. 05597\*, but this does not really come off and suggests horrible possibilities! **Patience and Prudence** are two little girls who sing *Tonight You Belong To Me* with becoming innocence, with Miss Prudence

appropriately coy in *A Smile and a Ribbon*. These are on London HLU8321\*. **Bill Snyder's** harpsipiano seems to incorporate the worst of both worlds in a selection called "Flying Fingers" on Bruns. OE9277. It is all terribly quick, but that's about all that can be said. Two EP revivals are respectively of **Roy Fox** on Decca DFE6272 (poor, and including Lew Stone's *Oh Monah* with all that *Minnie the Moocher* rubbish) and **Fred Astaire** in four of his best, taken from the LP, on Philips BBE12060. Irving Berlin, Gershwin and Kern are a good bunch of composers here, and *Slap that Bass* is good value. On LP there is the Italian pianist **Luciano Sangiorgi**. "An Italian in New York" (Durium DLUG6027) is mostly film music, but includes a delightful *I Got Plenty of Nuttin'* from "Porgy and Bess". **The Blue Stars** on Felsted SDL86046 are interesting. Formed by Miss Blossom Dearie, whom we have heard playing the piano and who is in fact one of the singers here, this octet give a varied selection of Continental-American, with *Lullaby in Birdland* in French as a savoury. "G.M. No. 2" is, of course, **Glen Miller**. Early recordings with the charming *Blues Serenade* and the sprightly *Why'd Ya Make Me Fall In Love* (Philips BBR8092). "Songs from Walt Disney's Magic Kingdom" is a straightforward selection of songs from "Snow White" to "Davy Crockett" (BBR8101), and **Ken Griffin** plays simple melodies in a simple way in his recorded version of his T.V. show "67 Melody Lane" on BBL7115. He is also on 78 (PB630) in *Cruising Down the River and Yours*, which really needs **Vera Lynn**, whose sentimental selection "If I Am Dreaming" is on Decca LK4152. **Sidney Bowman's** "Old Time Dance Tunes"—"for all time dancing"—are good and bring in the Scottish reels and such in small doses, mixed with the Veleta and the *Eton Boating Song* (Felsted PDL85016). **John Duffy** at the Mighty Wurlitzer (Columbia Square, Hollywood) is the big picture all right. This is very different from Mr. Griffin. I would not say that *Bye Bye Blues* was ideally suited to the organ, but in the course of the hour you can hear most of the tricks. The sleeve regards the whole thing as a monument of recording technique (London HAU2012). "Atmosphere by Antonini" is by **Alfredo Antonini**, and is notable for some music by Alec Templeton, the blind pianist who went to America and made a big success. *Canon for Cats* looks promising on paper, but fails to make any impact on this listener (Vogue LVA0031). Really just mood music, as is **Alfred Newman's** "Serenade to the Stars" (screen variety) on Bruns. LAT8135. Should not Templeton's "Musical Portraits" (*Bach tours Radio City, Grieg in a Groove*, and all that) be made available here? Some of them are extremely witty and they would make an enjoyable EP. **Stanley Black's** "Christmas Holiday for Romance" is the usual mixture with *Rudolph*, the *Red-nosed Reindeer* cheek by jowl with *Silent Night*, *Holy Night* (is there nobody to check these matters?), but includes a waltz—*Dreaming*—by Archibald Joyce, the English Waldteufel if you like. Joyce used to play the piano in a trio at Nuttall's cafe in Richmond at the beginning of the century and contributed to that small list of classic English waltzes to put beside the masterpieces of France and Austria. He is badly served on records (Decca LK4155). **Len Marten** does the *What*



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**COLUMBIA**

is a Wife? monologue on Oriole CB1333 and couples it with *What is a Horse?* Naturally a paragon of all the virtues. So for a number of our countrymen is a man called **Liberace**. Without the gold thread and the cuff links we can only hear the piano, but if his *Night and Day* can be written off, I think that if you had never heard of him you would find *Yankee Doodle Boogie* good fun (Philips PB636). At least he has done what very few people have succeeded in doing—putting over a piano act. That has always been a nightmare of music hall business, and many a virtuoso has crashed in the White-chapel Road. Maybe it is because Liberace is not a virtuoso? Now that is just being mean. O.K. Call it a day.

**Late Arrivals.** Here are two records by artists who, because they are essentially national, have achieved a measure of international fame, namely Miss A. Russell and Mr. N. Coward. **Anna Russell's** fourth LP carries on her splendid work. We have now reached a stage where some knowledge of her previous records is useful, since she now refers to them as if talking to old friends. Her "Guide to Concert Audiences" (Philips BBL7093) brings new versions of the German *lied* and the French

*melodie* (she uses the American term "art-song") as well as some examples from England and Spain, ending with a hilarious *Habanera Hoe Down*. Irrelevant to her lecture and thrown in at the end of the first side is a performance of Rossini's *La Danza*, which begins straight and then goes very crooked indeed. It is a brilliant *tour de force*. It is astonishing how Miss Russell can keep this going. I hear she has recently been appearing at the Johannesburg Festival, where one of her performances has been recorded for American Columbia. **Noel Coward** has travelled a long way from St. Alban's, Teddington (where he shared the same font with the present reviewer!). As far, in fact, as Wilbur Clark's Desert Inn at Las Vegas, where his recent act (June 7th, 1955) has been put on to disc by Philips (BBL7108). Here are songs old and new, sober and shocking. His present version of *Mad Dogs* is superb. He sings it as if he was sick of it, which somehow enhances it. Intending purchases without hearing first should be warned that the selection includes *Alice* and the brilliant but utterly scandalous version of *Let's Do It*, so hear first before playing outside the family. And, incidentally, full marks for a brilliant sleeve—dead right.

## FEDERATION AND SOCIETY NOTES

**The National Federation of Gramophone Societies** will gladly supply information and advice concerning the establishment of new Gramophone Societies. The Hon. Sec., Mr. C. H. Luckman, 41 Trinity Avenue, Enfield, Middlesex, will send a circular of suggestions and other helpful literature on receipt of a postal order for sixpence.

**The Annual General Meeting** of the Federation will take place in the hall of the Royal Empire Society, Craven Street, Strand, W.C.2, on Saturday, November 24th, at 2 p.m.

**National Gramophone Conference, 1957.** As announced in the October issue, the date of the Conference has been advanced to the week-end April 5th to 8th.

**Notices for Inclusion** in the January, 1957, issue of *The Gramophone* should be sent to Mr. G. H. Parfitt, 31 Lynwood Grove, Orpington, Kent, to reach him by December 7th. Postcards please.

**Acton & District G.S.** Meets monthly on Mondays at the King's Arms, Acton Vale, at 7.30 p.m. Next meeting October 29th. Hon. Sec., 24 Priory Avenue, Bedford Park, W.4.

**Ayr R.M.C.** Meets fortnightly in the Bonnie Doon Hotel, Carrick Road, Ayr, from October 7th at 7.30 p.m., and from January 6th, 1957. Hon. Sec., Met. Office, Prestwick Airport, Ayrshire.

**Barrow G.S.** Will meet at the John Winnerah Institute at 7 p.m. on the 9th and 23rd of this month. Hon. Sec., 303 Abbey Road, Barrow-in-Furness.

**Basingstoke G.S.** Alternate Mondays at 7.15 p.m. at the Red Lion Hotel, London Street. Next meeting November 12th. Hon. Sec., "The Haven", Greywell, Nr. Basingstoke.

**Bath G.S.** Speakers: November 9th, Stuart Hibberd. November 30th, Scott Goddard. Hon. Sec., 24 Crescent Gardens, Bath.

**Blackburn G.S.** Coming recitals in Y.M.C.A., Blackburn, at 7.30 p.m., Tuesdays, November 13th and 27th, December 11th. Hon. Sec., 43 St. Alban's Road, Darwen. Darwen 1103.

**Blackpool G.S.** Each Monday at the New Central Hotel, Reads Avenue, at 7.30 p.m. Joint Hon. Secs., 14 Codale Avenue, Bispham, or 14 Delaware Road, Leyton.

**Bolton G.S.** Alternate Thursdays at 7.30 p.m. in the Lecture Hall, Civic Centre. November 29th, Demonstration by Philips. Joint Hon. Secs., 44 Lee Lane, Horwich. Horwich 172.

**Bournemouth & District G.S.** Alternate Mondays at Linden Hall Hydro, Christchurch Road, at 7.30 p.m. Hon. Sec., 10 King George Avenue, Bournemouth.

**Bushey & Watford G.S.** Weekly on Tuesdays at 7.30 p.m. in the Galahad Room, Methodist Church, King Edward Road, Oxhey. Hon. Sec., "Dun-I", Folly Pathway, Radlett.

**Cheltenham G.S.** Alternate Mondays at Civic Playhouse. Guests include Georgie Henschel, David Franklin, Winifred Ferrier, Percy Kahn, Arthur Jacobs and Edmund Rubbra. Hon. Sec., 23 Imperial Square, Cheltenham.

**Chesham & District G.S.** Every Monday evening at 7.30 in the Co-operative Hall, Chesham Broadway. Hon. Sec., 8 Victoria Road, Chesham.

**City of Bristol G.S.** Every Monday at Bristol Music Club, 78 St. Paul's Road, Clifton, at 7.15 p.m. Lecturers include Reginald Redona and Harold Grace, Asst. Hon. Sec., 19 Beckington Road, St. John's Lane, Bristol, 3.

**Clydebank Library G.S.** Meets in the Library Lecture Hall on alternate Fridays at 7.30 p.m. November 2nd, 16th and 30th. Hon. Sec., 53 East Barns Street, Clydebank.

**Croydon G.S.** Alternate Saturdays in Norbury Library at 7 p.m. Next meeting, November 10th. Hon. Sec., 23 Penrith Road, Thornton Heath.

**Downlease M.C.** Chipping Sodbury, near Bristol. Alternate Tuesdays at the Old Grammar School. November 6th, Raphael Shelley (Bristol Old Vic). Chairman, The Garden Flat, 148 Fishponds Road, Bristol, 5.

**Dulwich & Forest Hill G.S.** Meetings November 2nd and November 16th (A.C.M.), at 2 Jews Walk, Sydenham. Hon. Sec., 87 Broadfield Road, Catford, S.E.6.

**Dundee R.M.S.** Meets alternate Tuesdays. Hon. Sec., 120 Byron Street, Dundee.

**Ealing G.S.** Alternate Fridays at "Parkfields", South Ealing Road, at 7.30 p.m. Hon. Sec., 150 Argyle Road, W.13.

**Enfield R.M.S.** Meets on the 1st and 3rd Friday in each month in Enfield Grammar School (Room 1). Newcomers most welcome. Details and programme from Hon. Sec., 88 Halstead Road, Winchmore Hill, N.21.

**Epsom G.S.** Meets on 2nd and 4th Friday each month at the Oak Room, West Hill House, Epsom, at 7.45 for 8 p.m. Hon. Sec., 31 Pound Lane, Epsom.

**Exeter & District G.S.** Recitals in St. David's Institute, Haldon Road, at 7.30 p.m. on alternate Fridays. November 9th and 23rd. Hon. Sec., 130 Wardrew Road, Exeter.

**Gillingham G.S.** Meets on the 1st and 3rd Friday each month in the Central Library at 7.30 p.m. Hon. Sec. Central Library, Gillingham, Kent.

**Great Yarmouth R.M.C.** Meets on alternate Mondays in the Central Library, Hall Quay, at 7.45 p.m. Hon. Sec., 14 Burleigh Close, Great Yarmouth.

**Grimsby & District G.S.** Meets fortnightly in Church House, Bull Ring. Hon. Sec., 2 Sackville Street, Grimsby.

**Guildford M.C.** Meets every Tuesday at 7.45 p.m. in the Small Hall, Co-operative Society, Haydon Place. Hon. Sec., "Lyndhurst", Thursley Road, Elstead.

**Hammersmith G.S.** Alternate Fridays at 8 p.m. at Westcott Lodge, W.6. Hon. Sec., 42 Rylatt Road, W.12. Next meeting November 9th.

**Henry Wood G.C.** Hon. Sec., 4 Beulah Hill, S.E.19. Meets every 3rd Sunday at 6.45 p.m. in the Music Room, 4 Beulah Hill.

**Hoover G.S.** Fortnightly from September 6th. Miss M. A. Iles, Hoover Ltd., Western Avenue, Perivale, Middlesex.

**Ilkley G.S.** Each Thursday at 8 p.m. in the Lecture Hall, Riddings Road. Hon. Sec., "Elstonville", Sussex Drive, Ben Rhydding, Ilkley 1347.

**Ipswich G.C.** Every Friday at 7.45 p.m. in the Ritz Cafe, Buttermarket. Hon. Sec., 97 Burrell Road, Ipswich.

**Jersey G.S.** Every Sunday at 8 p.m. at 1 Raleigh Avenue, St. Helier. Hon. Sec., 4 Minden Street, St. Helier.

**Luton G.S.** Meets on 3rd Friday each month. Hon. Sec., 27 The Crescent, Caddington, Luton.

**Midland G.S.** Alternate Thursdays at the Midland Institute, Paradise Street, Birmingham, 1. Next meeting November 8th. Hon. Sec., 52 Epwell Road, Birmingham, 23.

**Moseley Vocal R.C.** Alternate Mondays at Friends Institute, Moseley Road, Birmingham, 12. Hon. Sec., 10 Fernhill Road, Olton, Birmingham, 27.

**Orpington G.S.** Twenty years old on November 2nd. Write for details to Hon. Sec., 31 Lynwood Grove, Orpington.

**Oxford City G.S.** Meets 2nd and 4th Monday each month at St. Columbus Church Hall, Alfred Street. Hon. Sec., 129 Ridgfield Road, Oxford.

**Phoenix G.S.** Alternate Thursdays at 7.30 p.m. in Room 45, Bluecoat Chambers, School Lane, Liverpool, 1. Hon. Sec., 22 Burdon Road, Moreton, Wirral, Cheshire.

**Portobello G.C.** Meets in Grays Hotel, Portobello, each Sunday at 7.30 p.m. Hon. Sec., 18 Niddrie Road, POR 4845.

**Putney G.S.** Alternate Mondays at 7.30 p.m. in the Miramar Hotel, 67 Putney Hill. November 12th and 26th. 10th December, Walter Goehr. Hon. Sec., 6 Combe-martin Road, S.W.18.

**Recorded H. of M., Eltham.** Every Wednesday at 7.30 p.m. in the Club Room of the Park Tavern, Passey Place. Hon. Sec., 32 Wellhall Road, Eltham, S.E.9.

**Sheffield G.S.** November 5th, American Music. November 19th, Viennese Music. December 3rd, "Bruno Walter", December 17th, Record Review. Meetings in Y.M.C.A., Sheffield at 7.30 p.m. Hon. Sec., 52 Whirlowdale Road, Sheffield, 7. (72973).

**Sheffield R.M.C.** Each Tuesday in Church House, St. James Street, at 7.15 p.m. Hon. Sec., "Lathkill", 16 Dalewood Road, Sheffield, 8. (S. 73630).

**Southgate & District R.M.S.** Meets fortnightly at Crown Hotel, Chase Side, at 7.30 p.m. Next meeting November 14th. Hon. Sec., 49 Dale Green Road, New Southgate, N.11.

**Sussex G.C.** Meets at 7.30 p.m. on alternate Tuesdays at Cook's Hotel, 21 Old Steine, Brighton. Hon. Sec., 25 Queens Road, Brighton.

**Sutton Coldfield R.M.S.** Alternate Fridays at 7.30 p.m. in Central Library. Hon. Sec., 42 Beacon Road, Sutton Coldfield.

**Verdi Society.** Meets on Tuesdays twice monthly at Walker Art Gallery Lecture Hall, Liverpool, at 7.30 p.m. Next meeting November 6th. Hon. Sec., 39 Sutcliffe Street, Liverpool, 6.

**Wagner Society.** Meets in Shelley's Hotel, 8 Albemarle Street, W.1. Hon. Sec. at the above address. November 14th and 28th at 7 p.m.

**Welland Public Libraries M.C.** Alternate Mondays in Public Library, Park Road, at 8 p.m. Programme and information from the Library.

**William Byrd M.S. of Southall.** Alternate Mondays at 7.45 p.m. in North Road School. Next meeting November 5th. Hon. Sec., 4 Finchpool Villas, Uxbridge Road, Hayes. Hayes 4542.

**Woodford United Free Church.** Recitals: November 10th and December 8th at 8 p.m. D. J. Steven, 30 Gleggall Road, Woodford Green.

**Worcester G.S.** Alternate Saturdays in City Art Gallery, Foregate Street, at 7.15 p.m. Hon. Sec., 147 Comer Road, Worcester.

**Worthing R.M.C.** Every Monday at 7.45 p.m. at The Connaught Studios (next Connaught Theatre). Hon. Sec., 33 Orient Road, South Lancing.

### Book Review

#### "THE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF JAZZ"

The industry of the jazz chronicler has become legendary. But never can it have been revealed more astonishingly than in the new "Encyclopedia Of Jazz" by British-born, but now an American citizen, Leonard Feather.

On the contents flyleaf one immediately notices such headings as: Introduction by Duke Ellington; A Brief History of Jazz; Musical Analysis of Jazz; Giants of Jazz; Biographies; A Basic Collection of Jazz Records; Glossary of Terms Used By Jazz Musicians; Bibliography (of jazz books and periodicals).

A closer study quickly confirms that the promise contained in these headings is completely redeemed. For instance, the Biographies section deals with well over one thousand jazz musicians—from Buddy Bolden (circa 1878-1931) to . . . well, just about everyone you could think of who by about the end of 1954 (when presumably the book first went to press in America) had acquired anything worth calling a professional reputation. The information given includes places and dates of births, musical educations, professional careers, main musical characteristics, most important recordings, and in many cases even private addresses.

\* Arthur Barker Ltd., 30 Museum Street, London, W.C.1. £3 3s.

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thousands of compositions have come from his pen, hundreds of his records have been issued, and some of both are to be ranked for ever amongst the greatest moments of jazz...

on this magnificently recorded disc we go back through some of the highlights of this career, from *East St. Louis toodle-oo* to the very latest ELLINGTON creations.

The original arrangements still stand and, on the solid foundation of tried and trusted musicians like Harry Carney, Johnny Hodges and Ray Nance, the ELLINGTON band swings to yet another triumph of jazz recording...

this magnificent collection combines nostalgia, novelty and great musicianship on a record that is not only a milestone in the ELLINGTON career but also in the history of jazz...

### Historically speaking—The Duke

one London Jazz Series 12-inch LP record  
LTZ-N 15029

DUKE ELLINGTON (piano), CAT ANDERSON, CLARK TERRY, WILLIE COOK (trumpets), RAY NANCE (trumpet & violin), BRITT WOODMAN, JOHN SANDERS, QUENTIN JACKSON (trombones), JOHNNY HODGES (alto), RUSSELL PROCOPE (alto & clarinet), PAUL GONSALVES (tenor), JIMMY HAMILTON (tenor & clarinet), HARRY CARNEY (baritone & bass clarinet), JIMMY WOODE (bass), SAM WOODYARD (drums)

Recorded Chicago, February 7th-8th, 1956

East St. Louis toodle-oo; Creole love call; Stompy Jones; The jeep is jumpin'; Jack the Bear; In a mellow tone; Ko-ko; Midriff; Stomp, look and listen; Unbooted character; Lonesome lullaby; Upper Manhattan medical group



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# JAZZ AND SWING

Reviewed by

EDGAR JACKSON and OLIVER KING

## \*Claire Austin

\*\*\*The World's Jazz Crazy (Trixie Smith); Downhearted Blues (Lovie Austin, Alberta Hunter); See See Rider (Trad.); Good Time Flat Blues (Spencer Williams); Careless Love (Spencer Williams, Handy, Martha Koenig); Nobody Knows You When You're Down And Out (Jimmy Cox); Mecca Flat Blues (Jimmy Blythe); Fore Day Creep (Ida Cox) (Good Time Jazz LP LDG185—29s. 6jd.)

(Am. Good Time Jazz)—Claire Austin (voc) acc. by: Kid Ory (tub); Don Ewell (pno); Ed Garland (bass); Minor Hall (drs). 2/4/1954. U.S.A.

If Britain had never produced Otilie Patterson, no doubt we should all be enraptured by Miss Claire Austin, but as it is, for sheer blues feeling, and for variety of inflection, the little Newtownards girl has it all over the American lady. Not that I find difficulty in listening to this record; the accompanists alone are almost worth the money. But the material is hackneyed, and M as Austin's voice listless in places.

The notes are interesting and accurate. The composer of *Nobody Knows You*, by the way, is Jimmy Cox (which the note doesn't tell you). I think he was some relation of Ida Cox, the early pioneer blues recording artist. O.K.

## \*Chet Baker

"Chet Baker Sings"

\*\*I Wish I Knew (Gordon, Warren) (a); Daybreak (Grofé, Adamson) (c); You Don't Know What Love Is (de Paul) (d); Grey December (Camp) (a); I Remember You (Mercer, Scherisinger) (d); Let's Get Lost (McHugh, Loesser) (d); This Is Always (Gordon, Warren) (b); Long Ago And Far Away (Kern, Gershwin) (d); Someone To Watch Over Me (Gershwin) (b); Just Friends (Klenner, Lewis) (c) (12 in. Vogue LP LAE12018—38s. 3d.)

(a), (b) (Am. Pacific Jazz)—Baker (tpt, voc); Bud Shank (fute); Russ Freeman (pno); Corky Hale (harp); 4 celli; Red Mitchell (bass); Bob Neel (drs)†. 28/2/1955. U.S.A.

(c), (d) (do.)—Baker (tpt, voc); Freeman (pno); Carson Smith (bass); Neel (drs)†. 7/3/1955. U.S.A. † Notwithstanding contrary information on labels, these personae are believed to be correct.

Note: (a) and (c) available also on Vogue EPV1138.

Thank goodness Mr. Baker also plays his trumpet. As a vocalist he has some virtues. He sings in tune, can sustain his notes with something like correct usage of vibrato, and there is the suggestion of the instrumental phrasing you'd expect from any good jazz musician. But these better features are entirely negated by lack of voice quality and a let's-put-out-the-lights approach that may have its effect on adolescent females, but to me is as syrupy as Liberace's smirk and not half as amusing. E.J.

## \*Lawrence Brown

\*\*\*Rose Of The Rio Grande (Warren) (a); Caravan (Tilox, Ellington) (a); Down The Street, Round The Corner Blues (Brown, Lovett) (a); Where Or When? (Rodgers) (a); Just One Of Those Things (Porter) (b); Ill Wind (Arlen) (b); You Took Advantage Of Me (Rodgers) (b); Blues For Duke (Brown) (b); Just As Though You Were Here (De Lange, Brooks) (b); Autumn In New York (Duke) (b) (12 in. Columbia-Clef LP 33CX10046—39s. 7jd.)

(a) (Am. Clef)—Brown (tmb); Sam Taylor (tr); Leroy Lovett (pno); Lloyd Trotman (bass); Louis Bellson (drs). Poss. 1st-1956. U.S.A.  
(b) (do.)—Brown (tmb); Arthur Clarke/Al Coun (tr); Danny Bank (bar); Ernie Royal/Philip Sunkel (tpt); Hank Jones (pno); Wendell Marshall (bass); Jo Jones (drs). Arranger: Ralph Burns. Poss. mid-1955. U.S.A.

For nineteen years, from 1932 to 1951, fifty-one-year-old Lawrence Brown from Kansas City was one of the most featured musicians of the Duke Ellington Orchestra, and even when he left, to go touring with Johnny Hodges, he continued to be looked upon as one of the outstanding trombonists of the mid-period. Yet despite his eminence this is his first LP under his own name.

But better late than never. Brown is not served unduly well by the six Ralph Burns arrangements (enumerated (b)), and even less so by the others, which he wrote himself.

Furthermore his accompaniment in the first four titles (a) is anything but ideal for him. Sam "The Man" Taylor is a forceful tenorist, but would be more suitable in a rock 'n' roll group.

However, Brown himself plays well throughout the disc, especially in *Down The Street*, in which his sensitive tone, adroitness and melodic subtlety are alluringly revealed.

Ernie Royal and Hank Jones are among those also featured as soloists and do especially well in the up-tempo *Blues For Duke*. E.J.

## \*Sandy Brown Sidemen

\*\*\*Nobody Met The Train; Stay (a); Swiss Kriss (b); High Time (c); Meek The Other Way (d); Candy Stripes (e); Mouseparty (f); My Neck Of The Wood (g) (All Al Fairweather) (12 in. Tempo LP TAP—38s. 3d.)

(Vogue)—Sandy Brown's Jazz Band: Brown (cl); Al Fairweather (tpt); John R. T. Davies (tmb); Alan Thomas (pno); Mo Umanaky (bjo); Brian Parker (bass); Graham Burbage (drs); with guest stars (in a) William Disley (tr); (b) Stan Greig (trs); (c) Spike Mackintosh (tpt); (d) Johnny Pickard (tpt); (e) Dave Stevens (pno); (f) Bob Clarke (vln); (g) Dick Heckstall-Smith (sop). 27/5/1956. London.

Much of this record, by the present Sandy Brown band with previous Sandy Brown stalwarts invited back as guest stars for the occasion, is in what is usually known as the mainstream idiom: i.e. neither traditional in the purist sense nor modern in the bop sense. The rest—the blues with which it opens, *High Time* (with fine Mackintosh), and *Look The Other Way*, with great Pickard—are, I suppose, "trad.", with a quality of restraint that is rare in such music. *Mouseparty* is a rather effete affair; *Stay* has a lot of electric guitar, which I'll admit is less obnoxious than usual; *Swiss Kriss* has a lot of noisy drum solo work by Greig, and the ensemble sound is untidy. *Candy Stripes* also gets into a muddle, and the soprano and clarinet in the last track are too shrill. John R. T. Davies swings in fine form; his soli on the others (not too many) are a trifle on the harsh side. The leader plays good enough clarinet as a rule, and Fairweather puts in some interesting trumpet choruses. He is a promising composer of really original themes, which is a very strong selling-point for me. O.K.

## "THE GRAMOPHONE"

### POPULAR RECORD CATALOGUE

Vol. 3, No. 2, listing records issued from March to September, 1956, now on sale. Price 2s. 6d., from all record dealers.

## \*Ray Bush and The Avon Cities' Skiffle

\*\*How Long Blues? (Carr); Julian Johnson (Trad.); Lonesome Day Blues (James); I Don't Know (Lofton) (Tempo EP EXA40—13s. 7jd.)  
\*\*Green Corn (Trad.)  
\*\*Hey, Hey Daddy Blues (Trad.) (Tempo 78 A146; 45 45A146—6s. 3d.)

(Vogue)—Bush (voc, gtr); Wayne Chandler (gtr); Mike Hitchins (mandolin); Geoff Nicholls (bass); Basil Wright (washboard). 30/6/1956. London.

So now we have yet another skiffle group that isn't. This one is modelled on the Colyer and Donegan examples, and as such it is quite successful, with, despite a slight tendency to

monotony, a firm beat and some musicianly mandoline. But for my money, I'll wait till someone offers me a collectors' piece by the Memphis Jug Band or Cannon's Jug Stompers on Victor or Okeh. Then I'll have real skiffle music. O.K.

## \*Vic Dickenson Septet

\*\*\*\*When You And I Were Young, Maggie (McHugh, Frost) (a); You Brought A New Kind Of Love To Me (Kahal, Norman) (a); Everybody Loves My Baby (Palmer, Williams) (b); Nice Work If You Can Get It (Gershwin) (a) (Vanguard LP PPT12015—20s. 5d.)

(a) (Am. Vanguard)—Dickenson (tmb); Edmund Hall (cl); Shad Collins (tpt); "Sir Charles" Thompson (pno); Steve Jordan (gtr); Walter Page (bass); Jo Jones (drs). 1954. New York.  
(b) (do.)—Same personnel, plus Ruby Braff (tpt). 1954. New York.

Reviewing in my absence last January, Mike Nevard said of the first Vic Dickenson Vanguard to be issued here: "It is music for anyone who wants to hear jazz without gimmicks and prejudices". Like Mike on that occasion, I give the present record four stars and echo his words. For here is casual, relaxed jazz, unpretentious in form, but intelligent in content.

The extended version of *Everybody Loves My Baby* makes the best music. Guest star Ruby Braff contributes a strong, lyrical solo; Ed Hall's clarinet is also outstanding. On this and the other tracks, Dickenson plays most imaginatively. A versatile musician, his trombone work can be fierce and aggressive or subdued and tender. Although Shad Collins's trumpet stays muted most of the time, he blows powerfully in *Nice Work*. Sir Charles Thompson keeps up his habit of slipping musical quotations into his neat, Basic-like solos. It is almost unnecessary to add that this rhythm section swings all the way. E.J.

## \*"East Coast Jazz Scene"

\*\*\*\*Zany (Album) (a); Ida Bridges Falling Down (Albani) (a); Flying Down To Rio (Younans) (b); The Things We Did Last Summer (Styne, Cahn) (b); Darn That Dream (De Lange, Van Heusen) (b); Vibraphone Impressions (Elliott) (c); Foolin' Around (Mundy) (d); The Man I Love (Gershwin) (d); Tony's Blues (Fruscella) (e) (12 in. Vogue-Coral LP LVA9030—37s. 6jd.)

(a) (Am. Coral)—Larry Sonn Orch.: Sonn (leader); Hal McCusick, Richard Henry (alts); Bernie Fox, Frank Socolow (trs); Danny Bank (bar); Jack Hansen, Al Malarcha, Jimmy Nottingham (tpts); Bobby Asher, Sid Harris, Morley Troutman, Fred Zito (tubs); George Devans (vib); Fern Fachon (pno); Jimmy Norton (gtr); Roy Shain (bass); Maurice Marks (drs).

(b) (do.)—Gene Quill (alto) with Dick Sherman (tpt); Denise Thornton (pno); Buddy Jones (bass); Sol Gubin (drs).

(c) (do.)—Don Elliott (vib) with Hank Jones (pno); Wendell Marshall (bass); Rossiere "Shadow" Wilson (drs).

(d) (do.)—Coleman Hawkins (tr) with same rhythm section.

(e) (do.)—Tony Fruscella (tpt) with same rhythm section.

All 7/11/1955, at a public concert at the Pythian Temple, New York, compered by Al "Jazzbo" Collins.

Compered very genially by Al "Jazzbo" Collins, this concert turns out to be not only more varied, but also musically superior to most events of the kind that find their way on to records. Larry Sonn's Basic-styled orchestra makes a relaxed, swinging start, with trumpeter Jimmy Nottingham in great form on *Zany*.

After a busy solo in *Flying Down To Rio*, Gene Quill plays really inventive jazz on *Things We*

*Did Last Summer.* Dick Sherman (he and Quill once worked together in Claude Thornhill's band) doesn't come off quite so happily in his trumpet feature, *Darn That Dream*.

A display of musical wit is provided by Don Elliott. He takes off the styles and mannerisms of four vibraphonists—Red Norvo, Milt Jackson, Lionel Hampton and Terry Gibbs.

Nothing else in the concert, however, touches the performance by Coleman Hawkins. First of all the great tenor-saxophonist is heard "limbering up", all on his own; then, backed by a first-class rhythm section, he improvises a richly-toned, lavishly-phrased interpretation of *The Man I Love*.

Tony Fruscella rounds off the proceedings by blowing a series of good blues choruses on his trumpet. Incidentally, a black mark to Vogue-Coral for leaving details of this musician off the sleeve. Something also seems to have gone wrong with the solo routines for Larry Sonn's numbers. E.J.

#### \*Don Ewell

\*\*\*Muskrat Rambles (Ory); Rumpus Rag (Ewell); Parlour Social (Ewell); Wild Man Blues (Armstrong, Morton)

(Good Time Jazz EP EPG1167—13s. 7½d.)

(Am. Good Time Jazz)—Ewell (pno). 1947. U.S.A.

Excellent examples of intelligent jazz piano playing, without the clutter of drums and what-not. The now forty-six-year-old Baltimore-born Don Tyson Ewell is one of the greatest jazz musicians to have emerged during the so-called Revival. His warm, genial approach, unerring taste and fine sensitivity for each number are all rare qualities in this bash-'em-out age. He packs a sound beat, too, and has two good originals. The well-known *Ramble* and *Wild Man* become in his hands as welcome as old friends. O.K.

#### \*Famous Jazz Trumpets"

\*\*\*Louis Armstrong and Earl Hines—Weather Bird (Oliver) (b)

\*\*\*Bix Beiderbecke Gang—Sorry (Quicksell) (a)

\*\*\*Bunny Berigan Boys—I Nearly Let Love Go Slipping Through My Fingers (Woods) (a)

\*\*\*Bobby Hackett Orchestra—Doin' The New Low Down (McHugh) (d)

(Philips EP BBE12062—11s. 10d.)

(a) (Am. Okeh)—Beiderbecke (cornet); Don Murray (cl); Bill Rank (tmb); Frank Signorelli (pno); Howdy Quicksell (bjo); Adrian Rollini (bass-sax); Chauncey Morehouse (drs). 25/10/1927. U.S.A.

(b) (do.)—Armstrong (cornet); Hines (pno). 8/12/1928. Chicago.

(c) (Am. Vocalion)—Berigan (t); Slat Long (cl); Jack Lacey (tmb); Joe Bushkin (pno); Eddie Condon (gr); Morton Steinmaker (bass); Cozy Cole (drs). 9/6/1936. New York.

(d) (do.)—Hackett (cornet); Per-Wee Russell (cl); Ernie Caceres (bar); Brad Gowans (tmb); Dave Bowman (pno); Eddie Condon (gr); Clyde Newcombe (bass); Andy Picardi (drs). 4/11/1938. New York.

Previous issues (†detailed): (a) Parlophone R3503†; inc. in 33S1035. (b) R1194†, inc. in 33S1069. (c) Vocalion S26†.

Though all four of these trumpet players may fairly be described as famous in their respective spheres, it is almost as great an insult to Louis and Bix as it is to their admirers to mix them up on one record with Berigan and Hackett. Moreover while Louis and Bix are at their best, neither Hackett nor Berigan, with their pedestrian approach, come any nearer than do their associates to the great masters. And while Louis's and Bix's contributions still come over almost as clearly as modern hi-fi, the others, though ten years and more younger, sound muzzy, with appallingly gritty surfaces. O.K.

#### \*Victor Feldman Modern Jazz Quartet

\*\*\*Item From Carmen (Bizet); Dream (Mercer)

(Esquire EP EP104—13s. 7½d.)

(Esquire)—Feldman (vib); Tommy Pollard (pno); Lennie Bush (bass); Phil Seamen (drs). 11/7/1955. London.

As far as jazz is concerned, Britain's losses have a habit of turning into America's gains. Outstanding instances are George Shearing,

then Marian McPartland, Ronnie Ball and Ralph Sharon. Latest is young Victor Feldman, now a featured soloist in Woody Herman's orchestra.

Despite the fact that Victor has played much better on other records than on these two tracks, he still displays a remarkable fluency of invention and great swing. Much as I normally resent jazz musicians tinkering with the classics, Feldman's paraphrase of the *Toreador's Song* from Bizet's "Carmen" strikes me as possessing a lot of ingenuity and not a little charm.

*Dream* would have been better had it been (except for Tommy Pollard's piano solo) a little less of a soporific. E.J.

#### \*Dizzy Gillespie-Stan Getz Sextet

\*\*\*Impromptu (Gillespie) (a); One Alone (Gillespie) (b); Girl Of My Dreams (Clapp, Kallias) (a); Siboney (Lecuna) (a)

(Columbia-Clef LP 33C9027—29s. 6½d.)

(a) (Am. Norgran)—Getz (sax); Gillespie (t); Oscar Peterson (pno); Herb Ellis (gr); Ray Brown (bass); Max Roach (drs). Prob. 1953. U.S.A.

(b) (do.)—Gillespie (t); Earl Mabley (bar); Wade Legge (pno); Lou Hackney (bass); Charlie Persip (drs). Date untraced. U.S.A.

Norman Granz seems to take particular delight in bringing musical opposites together in the recording studio. Sometimes the results are exciting; more often they're not. This mixing of Dizzy Gillespie and Stan Getz, is among the latter. Dizzy manages to blow in fairly normal fashion, but Getz is forced into a vigorous style far removed from his natural coolness.

*Impromptu*, taken too fast, is a bit of a mess—apart from Oscar Peterson's nimble piano solo. Dizzy is in good form on *One Alone* and above the shifting tempos of *Siboney*. Only in *Girl Of My Dreams*, a short but satisfying track, do the two soloists work together with much sympathy. It seems safe to say that Gillespie admirers will enjoy the record, but Getz fans may be disappointed. E.J.

### Leonard Feather's ENCYCLOPEDIA OF JAZZ

See page 228

#### \*Hampton-Tatum-Rich Trio

\*\*\*Perdido (Tisul); Hallelujah (Youmans); I'll Never Be The Same (Malneck, Signorelli); How High The Moon (Lewin); What Is This Thing Called Love? (Porter); More Than You Know (Youmans); Makin' Whoopie (Donaldson)

(12 in. Columbia-Clef LP 33CX10045—39s. 7½d.)

(Am. Clef)—Lionel Hampton (vib); Art Tatum (pno); Ruddy Rich (drs). Possibly 1955. U.S.A.

At last! Lionel Hampton in company that brings out the best in him. And what a best! None of that too often heard tongue-in-cheek showing off. Style still the same old Hampton. But everything in the best of taste, full of imagination, ingenuity, wit, and with a swing that never lets up.

And that just about sums up Art Tatum and Buddy Rich, too. Tatum still loves those runs and other highly decorative embroideries. But he seems to have been so much at ease, has such a phenomenal technique and plays with such a swing that it wouldn't really matter what he did. Rich has some solos, and he happily devotes them to swinging and not to just showing off fancy beats for fancy beats' sake. But his great strength here lies in the unobtrusive but irresistibly inspiring way he feeds and drives his two colleagues. And standing out even more thrillingly than what these three fine jazz men do individually is the way they work together. Their sympathy and rapport has to be heard to be believed.

This session must have been great fun. I have never heard a record in which those who made

it more obviously enjoyed themselves. The recording does their efforts justice—which is more than one can say for some of Mr. Norman Granz's jazz productions. E.J.

#### \*Clancy Hayes and Lu Watters Jass Band

\*\*\*Auntie Skinner's Chicken Dinner (Morse, Fields, Carroll); Nobody Knows You When You're Down And Out (Ida Cox); Alabama Bound (De Sylva, Henderson, Green); Sailing Down The Chesapeake Bay (Botsford, Haver); (Columbia-Clef EP SEB10040—11s. 1½d.)

(Am. Clef)—All (notwithstanding contrary information on sleeve) Hayes (voc, bjo); Bob Helm (cl); Wally Rose (pno); Dick Lammi (bass); Lu Watters (washboard). Date untraced. U.S.A.

Although the sleeve-note says that only Auntie Skinner has the above quintet, and that the others are augmented by all sorts of brass and another banjo, in fact all four tracks are by the same personnel. They are pleasant enough if you like the Louisiana Five and similar groups where a Dixieland clarinet leads; but they are all much of a muckness, and Helm is not a particularly inventive musician anyway. The rhythm section is solid, verging on the stolid. O.K.

#### \*Johnny Hodges

\*\*\*Mood Indigo (Bigard, Ellington); Squatty Roo (Hodges)

(Columbia-Clef EP SEB10039—11s. 1½d.)

(Am. Norgran)—Hodges (alto); Arthur Clarke (tr); Harold Baker (t); Lawrence Brown (tmb); Leroy Lovett (pno); John Williams (bass); Louis Bellson (drs). Possibly early 1955. U.S.A.

It was 1941 when Johnny Hodges made his original recording of *Squatty Roo*. This new and extended version finds him still the most immaculate and assured of alto soloists, always swinging, never at a loss for ideas. Shorty Baker's trumpet is forceful, intelligent, and marks him as a really fine artist, and new arrival Arthur Clarke takes a couple of lively tenor choruses. Only Lawrence Brown and Louis Bellson (in his solo) fail to sound at their best.

*Mood Indigo* goes back even further—to 1930, when Duke Ellington made his first record of the number. The famous three-part harmony of clarinet (Barney Bigard)-muted trumpet (Artie Whetsel)-trombone (Joe Nanton) has gained in warmth and richness by the clever scoring in the substitution of Hodges's alto for the clarinet. Again Harold Baker shines as a soloist and throughout Hodges performs with typical virtuosity. E.J.

#### \*"Jazz Gumbo"

\*\*\*Al Fairweather Quartet—I'm In The Market For You (Hanley, McCarthy) (d); Chinatown, My Chinatown (Jerome, Schwartz, Gumble) (d)

\*\*\*Fawkes-Turner Quintet—Mandy (James P. Johnson†) (a); Blueberry Hill (Lewis, Stork, Rose) (c)

\*\*\*Terry Lightfoot Jazzmen—Tishomingo Blues (S. Williams) (b); One Sweet Letter From You (Warren, Brown, Clare) (b)

\*\*\*Johnny Parker Barrelhouse Four—Mr. Freddy Blues (Shayne) (a); Hold That Thing (Parker) (a)

(Nixa Jazz Today LP NJT503—26s. 5d.)

(a) (Nixa)—Parker (pno); Cedric West (gr); Jim Bray (bass); Stan Greig (drs). 25/5/1954. London.

(b) (do.)—Lightfoot (cl); Colin Smith (t); John Hunt (tmb); Alan Wilcox (bjo); Bill Reid (bass); John Richardson (drs). 29/5/1956. London.

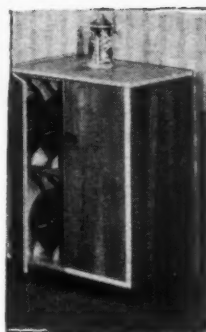
(c) (do.)—Fawkes (cl); Bruce Turner (alto); Dill Jones (pno); Major Holley (bass); Phil Deamer (drs). 26/6/1956. London.

(d) (do.)—Fairweather (t); Sandy Brown (cl); W. Disley (gr); Major Holley (bass). 10/7/1956. London.

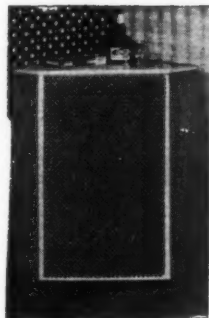
† Erroneously attributed on label to Berlin, whose *Mandy* is an entirely different composition.

The best ingredient in this gumbo is the Fairweather Quartet. They play with a mellow sound and easy beat that most bands miss. Johnny Parker's *Hold That Thing* seems to derive from *Saturday Night Function*, but Mr. Freddy is neat and crisp. The Fawkes-Turner Quintet tends to modernism, but acceptably enough to these aged ears. The Lightfoot band is raucous as only enthusiastic young men can

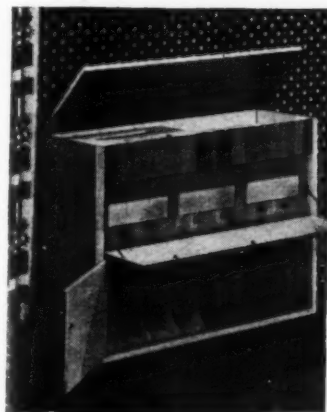
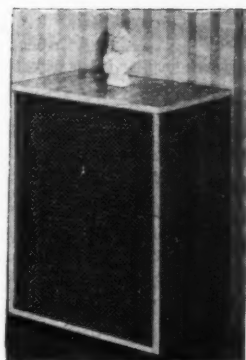
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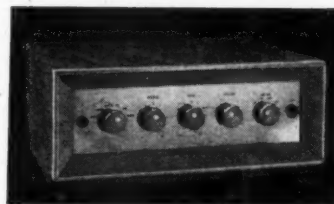
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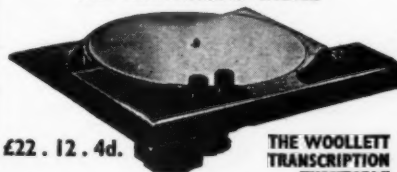
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be; nevertheless its blues swings along reasonably well. O.K.

### \*The Jazz Message\*

\*\*\*There Will Never Be Another You (Warren) (b); Catlin (Mobley) (b); Madeline (Mobley) (b); When I Fall in Love (Young) (b); Budo (Bud Powell, Miles Davis) (a); I Married An Angel (Rodgers) (a); The Jazz Message (Freedom For All) (Cadena) (a) (12 in. London LP LPTZ-C15028-37s. 64d.)

(a) (Am. Savoy)—Donald Byrd (leader, tpt); John La Porta (alto); Horace Silver (pno); Wendell Marshall (bass); Kenny Clarke (drs). 30/1/1956. U.S.A.

(b) (do.)—Byrd (leader, tpt); Hank Mobley (trr); Ronnie Ball (pno); Doug Watkins (bass); Clarke (drs). 8/2/1956. U.S.A.

The title of this LP seems to come from the fact that Donald Byrd, Hank Mobley, Horace Silver and Doug Watkins have all played with the Jazz Messengers, a regular group working on America's East Coast.

Joined here by some non-Messengers, they create unpretentious but thoughtful music. Young Donald Byrd (he's 24, Detroit-born, and only moved to New York last year) follows up his good work in last month's "Top Brass" with more striking playing. Sometimes his coolness overcomes his lyrical feeling (notably on slow ballads), then he sounds a wee bit languid. But on an up-tempo track (*Catlin* for instance) he plays with great delicacy while managing to swing all the time.

Hank Mobley, a hard-toned, vigorous tenor soloist in the Sonny Stitt style, is at his best on *Catlin* and *Madeline* (both his own originals). Britain's Ronnie Ball stands up well in this company, but Horace Silver is just that much more experienced and imaginative a pianist. A pupil of Tristano, John LaPorta sometimes sounds a little frigid. His six choruses in *Budo*, however, are among the record's highspots. But perhaps the best jazz of all comes in *The Jazz Message*, where the musicians blow a series of casual blues choruses. E.J.

### \*Hank Jones Quartet/Quintet

\*\*\*Almost Like Being in Love (Loewe) (a); An Evening At Papa Joe's (Cadena) (b); And Then Some (Cadena) (b); Summer's Gone (Cadena) (a); Don't Blame Me (McHugh) (a) (12 in. London LP LPTZ-C15014-37s. 64d.)

(a) (Am. Savoy)—Jones (pno); Donald Byrd (tpt); Eddie Jones (bass); Kenny Clarke (drs). November, 1955. U.S.A.

(b) (do.)—Same personnel, plus Matty Dice (tpt). November, 1956. U.S.A.

During his professional career, Henry "Hank" Jones, now thirty-eight years old, has worked with Hot Lips Page, Andy Kirk, John Kirby and Coleman Hawkins as well as acting as accompanist to Billy Eckstine and Ella Fitzgerald. Yet it is only recently that he became well known this side of the Atlantic.

It happened as a result of his apparently having been appointed "house" pianist by the American Savoy Records Company. At any rate for the last two years he has played on practically every one of their jazz sessions. And he deserves his success. An imperturbable, always tasteful instrumentalist, he enhances in this, the first LP under his name to appear here, his already notable reputation for being an imaginative soloist with a charm that is all his own, especially on ballads, as well as an unassuming but inspiring accompanist.

With him here are two new trumpet players—Donald Bird and Matty Dice. Dice has not greatly impressed me. He appears to have possibilities, but as yet his tone is rather harsh and his approach rather awkward. Bird is a very different proposition. His tone is excellent, his style polished and swinging, and he has ideas that would be a credit to a much more experienced player. In fact I rate him as already one of the best of the younger trumpet men, and I shall be surprised if he does not go right to the top. E.J.

### \*Lee Konitz with Warne Marsh

\*\*\*\*Topsy (Eddie Durham) (a); There Will Never Be Another You (Harry Warren) (b); I Can't Get Started (Duke) (a); Donna Lee (Charlie Parker) (b); Two Not One (Tristano) (b); Don't Squawk (Pettiford) (b); Ronnie's Line (Ball) (c) Background Music (Marsh) (b) (12 in. London LP LPTZ-K15025-37s. 64d.)

(a) (Am. Atlantic)—Konitz (alto); Warne Marsh (trr); Billy Bauer (gtr); Oscar Pettiford (bass); Kenny Clarke (drs).

(b) (do.)—Same personnel, plus Sal Mosca (pno). (c) (do.)—Personnel as for (a), plus Ronnie Ball (pno). All June, 1955. New York.

The sympathy of ideas and approach which Tristano-taught, Parker disciple Lee Konitz and Warne Marsh display on this record is amazing. The music is often intricate, and though not exciting jazz is always tasteful. *Topsy* swings as much as any track and also exhibits how tightly the two saxists can blend their playing. *Background Music* is another good example of the unity they achieve in this way.

Oscar Pettiford, always a subtle bassist, takes a number of solos. Sal Mosca reveals himself as a capable pianist and Ronnie Ball, the English pianist who migrated to America in 1953, makes a brief appearance in his own composition, *Ronnie's Line*. The brilliance of Kenny Clarke's drumming can almost be taken for granted by this time. E.J.

### Humphrey Lyttelton and his Band

\*Echoing The Blues (Lyttelton)

\*\*\*Love, Love, Love (McRae, Wyche, David) (Parlophone 78 R4212; 45 45R4212-6s. 7d.)

(Parlophone)—Lyttelton (tpt); Bruce Turner (alto); John Picard (tmb); Johnny Parker (pno); Freddy Legon (gtr); Jim Bray (bass); Stan Greig (drs). 13/7/1956. London.

A stunt opening to the blues side, developing into a raucous bit of so-called mainstream jazz (?) on a rock 'n' roll kick, are hardly qualities likely to endear this record to me. The same is nearly true of the other side. Is this blatant commercialism the parting of the ways between Humph and the fine jazz he used to play? I hope it is just a bad moment, and I believe so, for the label is red instead of blue and white. Nevertheless, I blush for the shame of it. O.K.

### \*Humphrey Lyttelton Five

\*\*\*\*Squeeze Me (Waller, Williams) (a); Handful Of Keys (Waller) (b); Lightly And Politely (Lyttelton) (a); It's A Thing (Lyttelton) (a) (Parlophone EP GE P5850-10s. 54d.)

(a) (Parlophone)—Lyttelton (tpt); Bruce Turner (alto); Johnny Parker (pno); Jim Bray (bass); Stan Greig (drs). 29/9/1956. London.

(b) (do.)—Same personnel. 20/10/1955. London.

This is more like it. If it weren't for the rather too polite rhythm section, these would be five-star jobs. Humph and Turner exhibit a perfection of understanding and tasteful cohesion that is very rare wherever you look in jazz. It was in the Oliver band, Morton's first Red Hot Peppers and more recently in the Mezzrow-Bechet sides on King Jazz-Vogue. Now we can boast of men able to match the finest American jazzmen. I think I like the two Humph originals slightly the better; they have a freshness and a subtle simplicity that keep one's attention riveted all the way. And don't let anyone fool you with that balderdash about saxophones not being good for jazz. It depends on who plays them, and what they play. In these examples, both are exemplary. O.K.

### \*Modern Jazz Quartet

\*\*\*\*Versailles (Lewis) (a); Angel Eyes (Dennis, Brent) (a); Fontessa (Lewis) (a); Over The Rainbow (Arlen) (b); Bluesology (Milt Jackson) (b); Willow, Weep For Me (Ronell) (b); Woody'n' You (Gillespie) (b) (12 in. London LP LPTZ-K15022-37s. 64d.)

(Am. Atlantic)—John Lewis (pno); Milt Jackson (vib); Percy Heath (bass); Connie Kay (drs). (a) 22/1/1956; (b) 14/2/1956. New York.

Only last month John Lewis earned five stars from me for his Modern Jazz Society issue on

Columbia-Clef. Now he wins five more as London bring out the first recording made by his Modern Jazz Quartet for the American Atlantic label.

What more can one say about this amazing group than has already been said? Milt Jackson displays his agile inventiveness in *Rainbow and Willow*; John Lewis takes a firm, imaginative piano solo in *Bluesology*.

But every track has its special merit, with the two originals by Lewis—*Versailles* and the suite *Fontessa*—especially showing off the Quartet's distinctive qualities. The former is an intricate, swinging performance. The latter takes up most of the first side. Fragile, graceful, lyrical, it is beautifully interpreted by Jackson and Lewis. Connie Kay, who replaced Kenny Clarke, should also get a diploma for the remarkable use he makes of cymbals during the final section.

Recording, with Lewis sounding as though he had a real concert grand at his economical but masterly command, is excellent. E.J.

### \*Modern Jazz Sextet

\*\*\*\*Tour De Force (Gillespie); Dizzy Meets Sonny (Gillespie); Ballad Medley: Old Folks (Robinson); What's New? (Haggart); How Deep Is The Ocean? (Berlin); Mean To Me (Turk, Ahlert); Blues For Bird (Stitt, Gillespie) (12 in. Columbia-Clef LP 33CX10048-59s. 74d.)

(Am. Norgan)—Sonny Stitt (alto); Dizzy Gillespie (tpt); John Lewis (pno); Skeeter Best (gtr); Percy Heath (bass); Charlie Persip (drs). Possibly circa mid-1955. U.S.A.

Notwithstanding the presence of John Lewis and Percy Heath, this group has no connection with the Modern Jazz Quartet. Furthermore, instead of the tight, experimental jazz which the Quartet features, the music here is casual and free-swinging. Great solo-playing wins this record five stars. Dizzy Gillespie is at his most audacious and dynamic, his solos beautifully poised and controlled. Rather more sober in style, John Lewis creates sensitive yet forceful music. Stitt blows fluently and with great power.

Dizzy can be heard at his best in *Tour De Force*, a slightly frantic *Dizzy Meets Sonny* and *How Deep Is The Ocean?* *Old Folks* and *What's New?* feature Sonny Stitt and John Lewis respectively. But the climax of the record is the superb blues-playing by all three soloists (plus Skeeter Best's eloquent guitar) in *Blues For Bird*, a tribute to Charlie Parker. This is jazz at its greatest and most expressive. E.J.

### \*Turk Murphy and his Band

\*\*\*\*Storyville Blues (untested); Just A Closer Walk With Thee (Trad.); Memphis Blues (Mr. Crump) (Handy); Big Butter And Egg Man (Armstrong, Venable); Floatin' Down To Cotton Town (Klickman); Canal Street Blues (Armstrong, Oliver); Papa Dip (Lil Armstrong); Mecca Flat Blues (Jimmy Blythe); Pineapple Rag (Joplin); High Society (Steele) (12 in. Phillips LP BBL7095-35s. 14d.)

(Am. Columbia)—Murphy (tmb, washboard) and (as far as can be ascertained from the confusing sleeve note) Bill Carter (cl); Doc Evans (cornet); Santo Pecora (tmb); Pete C'ute (pno); Dick Lammi (bjo, bass); Thad Wilkerson (drs).

### \*Turk Murphy's Jazz Band

\*\*\*\*Minstrels Of Annie Street (Murphy) (a); Little John's Rag (Murphy) (a); Bay City (Murphy) (a); Mesa Round (Murphy) (a); Cakewalking Babies From Home (C. Williams) (V) (b); O Daddy Blues (Russell, Herbert) (V) (b); Wolverine Blues (Morton) (c); Hot Time In The Old Town Tonight (Heyden, Mertz) (V) (b) (Good Time Jazz LP LDC186-29s. 64d.)

(a) (Am. Good Time Jazz)—Murphy (tmb); Bob Helm (cl); Don Kinch (tpt); Wally Rose (pno); Pat Patton (bjo); George Bruns (uba); Johnny Brent (drs). 10/7/1951. Hollywood.

(b) (do.)—Murphy (tmb); Helm (cl); Rose (pno); Dick Lammi (bjo); Bob Short (uba, cornet); Claire Austin (voc). 11/4/1952. Hollywood.

(c) (do.)—Murphy (washboard); Helm (cl); Rose (pno); Lammi (bjo); Short (uba). Same question.

Despite the fact that the only way of ascertaining the possible personnel is by wading through

George Avakian's lengthy sleeve note to discover the soloists mentioned, and that the usually reliable Avakian has slipped up in saying that *Floatin' Down To Cotton Town* was written in the 'thirties (actually it was nearer 1910), it's the Philips disc that wins here.

Although it was recorded (in New Orleans) before an audience, the reproduction is excellent. And the performance is superb—easy, crisp, agile, musically jazz, with attention paid to the right, sympathetic tempi for the tunes, playing in tune, not pressing or dragging the beat. And the audience is appreciative without being vulgarly demonstrative.

The Good Time Jazz LP is by what is really the remnants of the Lu Watters band. The recording is slightly better than on the Watters sides mentioned later, but the choice of numbers is not very interesting, and despite the superficial enthusiasm the whole thing is pretty dull.

But even if it means giving up some other vice for a while, get Mr. Murphy on the Philips, particularly if you happen to play in a revivalist band yourself. He gives an often much-needed lesson on what the finest white jazz should—and can—sound like. O.K.

#### ★New Jazz Sounds

\*\*\*Just One Of Those Things (Porter) (a); Marriage Blues (Carter) (a); Angel Eyes (Dennis, Brent) (b); That Old Black Magic (Arlen) (b); The Song Is You (Kern) (b); This Can't Be Love (Rodgers) (c); Frenesi (Dominguez) (d) (12 in. Columbia-Clef LP 33CX10049—\$9s. 7½d.)

(a) (Am. Norgran)—Benny Carter (alto); Dizzy Gillespie (tp); Bill Harris (mb); Oscar Peterson (pno); Herb Ellis (gtr); Ray Brown (bass); Buddy Rich (drs).

(b) (do.)—Personnel as for (a), minus Gillespie.

(c) (do.)—Carter (alto); Don Abney (pno); George Duvivier (bass); Louis Bellson (drs).

(d) (do.)—Carter (alto); Peterson (pno); Ellis (gtr); Brown (bass); Bobby White (drs). All possibly mid-1955. U.S.A.

Dizzy Gillespie turns up again—and in top form—on a couple of tracks on this record. This time his companions are Benny Carter, Bill Harris and the JATP rhythm section. But Carter is the real star. Perhaps the most graceful of all alto players, he solos on every track, including an elegantly patterned series of choruses on his own *Marriage Blues*.

Bill Harris plays trombone in his slightly breathless style, taking many good solos. Oscar Peterson and Herb Ellis also come to the fore on several tracks. The record's title is a complete misnomer. There are no new jazz sounds to be heard here. Not that it matters much when the old ones can be made to sound as good as this. E.J.

#### ★Opus De Jazz

\*\*\*Opus De Funk (Horace Silver); Opus Pocus (Cadena); You Leave Me Breathless (Hollander, Freed); Opus And Interlude (Cadena) (12 in. LP London LTZ-C15026—\$7s. 6½d.)

(Am. Savoy)—Frank Wess (flute, tenor); Milt Jackson (vib); Hank Jones (pno); Eddie Jones (bass); Kenny Clarke (drs). 28/10/1955. New York.

America seems to be extending that aggravating procedure of devising slick titles for records in preference to identifying them by the name of the main artist or (in the case of a purely recording instrumental group) the name of the leader for the occasion. This is bad enough when the title has some sensibly informative meaning, but it becomes downright blush-provoking when it is just some purely window-dressing, fatuous, meaningless phrase.

Take the case of this record. It is called "Opus De Jazz" for, as far as I can discover, no better reason than that three of the tunes have the word "Opus" in their title, and because nobody concerned had the simple imagination to think up something which would reveal the much more important fact that it

features the grand Frank Wess and Milt Jackson, not to mention also in some of the best playing either has ever put on record.

Indeed in every way this is a jam session of rare quality. Three of the tracks are blues. The first, a 13-minute performance of Horace Silver's *Opus De Funk*, features a series of choruses by Jackson, Wess and Hank Jones, starting off with five apiece and then decreasing by one each time round. Good though Wess is on flute, I really prefer his tenor-playing. The slower *Opus Pocus* has him improvising a sensitive solo on that instrument. Hank Jones plays as nimbly as ever, and with Eddie Jones and Kenny Clarke also in it, the rhythm team could hardly be other than superb. E.J.

#### ★Kid Ory's Creole Jazz Band

\*\*\*\*Creole Song (Ory) (V) (a); Get Out Of Here (Ory, Bud Scott) (b); Blues For Jimmy Noone (Ory) (b); Buster (Benny Moten, Edgar Hayes) (b); Panama (Tyers) (c); Under The Bamboo Tree (Cole) (V) (d); Careless Love (Handy) (c); Do What Ory Say (Ory) (V) (e) (Good Time Jazz LP LDC184—20s. 6½d.)

(a), (b) (Am. Crescent)—Ory (mb); Omer Simeon (cb); Mutt Carey (tp); Buster Wilson (pno); Bud Scott (gtr); Ed Garland (bass); Alton Redd (drs). 3/8/1944. Hollywood.

(c), (d), (e) (do.)—Same personnel, except Minor Hall (drs) replaces Redd. 5/8/1945. Hollywood.

(a) and (e) have V by Ory; (d) by Bud Scott.

Twelve years old, these are among the greatest records Ory ever made under his own name. He had developed his peculiar technique to a point where it was no longer hit or miss, and he had yet to "go commercial" with those fearsome klaxon horn noises. Simeon, the greatest living jazz clarinetist bar none, plays some stupendous stuff, clean and sweet as a spring morning. Redd is a splendid drummer, and if Mutt Carey was not a Ladriner, a Mitchell or an Armstrong, he knew what to do and did it. I've been hoping for this record to be issued here. It richly deserves its full quota of stars. The recording is excellent, too. O.K.

#### ★Charlie Parker

\*\*\*Au Privave (Parker); She Rote (Parker); K.C. Blues (Parker); Star Eyes (Ray, De Paul) (Columbia-Clef EP SEB10038—11s. 14d.)

(Am. Clef)—Parker (alto); Miles Davis (tp); Walter Bishop (pno); Teddy Kotick (bass); Max Roach (drs). February, 1951. New York.

#### ★Charlie Parker and Dizzy Gillespie

\*\*\*Bloomdido (Parker) (c); My Melancholy Baby (Norton, Watson, Burnett) (c); Relaxing With Lee (Parker) (c); Fusspot (Parker) (a); Leap Frog (Parker) (c); An Oscar For Trendwell (Parker) (c); Mohawk (Parker) (c); Visa (Parker) (a) (Columbia-Clef LP 33C0026—29s. 6½d.)

(a) (Am. Mercury)—Parker (alto); Kinny Dorham (tp); Tommy Tucker (mb); Al Haig (pno); Tommy Potter (bass); Max Roach (drs); Vidal Bolando (bongoes). Early April, 1949. New York.

(b) (do.)—Same personnel, minus Tucker, Bolando. 5/5/1949. New York.

(c) (Am. Clef)—Parker (alto); Gillespie (tp); Thelonius Monk (pno); Curly Russell (bass); Buddy Rich (drs). 6/6/1950. New York.

† This personnel differs from that on sleeve, but may be taken as correct.

Wit is a much rarer quality in music than profundity. Jazz forms no exception. As well as being creators of some of the most stimulating and original jazz improvisations, Charlie Parker and Dizzy Gillespie are also remarkable in managing quite often to be witty. Plenty of examples can be found on their records, but the coda to *My Melancholy Baby* is as good as any.

The genius of these two musicians makes the LP an essential item for anyone claiming to appreciate modern jazz. Both men play superbly, and even the two tracks on which Kinny Dorham replaces Gillespie have outstanding solos by Parker. The presence of Thelonius Monk, that brilliant if erratic pianist, is another good reason for giving this five stars.

If the EP seems a trifle disappointing by comparison, blame it on the fact that Miles Davis is less dynamic than Gillespie. Yet although the tension is lower, Parker creates memorable jazz on every track. E.J.

#### ★Ottile Patterson

\*\*\*\*Beale Street Blues (Handy) (a); Jail-House Blues (Bessie Smith, Williams) (a); Shipwreck Blues (Bessie Smith) (b); 'Tain't No Sin (Walter Donaldson, Leslie) (a) (Nixa Jazz Today EP NJE1023—11s. 10d.)

(a) (Nixa)—Ottile Patterson (voc) acc. by Chris Barber's Jazz Band; Barber (tmb); Monty Sunshine (clt); Pat Halcox (tp); Dick Bishop (gtr/bjo); Dick Smith (bass); Ron Bowden (drs). 9/7/1956. London.

(b) (do.)—Ottile Patterson (voc, pno) with Bishop (gtr); Barber (bass). Same session.

Ottile Patterson at her best. *Shipwreck Blues*, with its eerie, rumbling accompaniment by Miss Patterson herself, is one of the finest blues vocals ever made in England. The singer puts such feeling and such clarity into every syllable that its impact is quite overwhelming. The rumbustious *'Tain't No Sin*, a hit tune of 1930, gets a bit Sophie Tuckerish in places, and poor Ottile, saved from the shipwreck, gets drowned by the band on the next track. Her *Beale Street* is a little lacking in force, but the *Jailhouse* track brings us back to the exemplary character of the first number. O.K.

#### ★Russell Procope

\*\*\*Lady Of The Evening (Berlin); Birth Of The Blues (De Sylva, Brown, Henderson); Love Walked In (Gershwin); Please Be Kind (Cahn, Chaplin); I May Be Wrong (Sullivan); In The Shade Of The Old Apple Tree (Williams, Van Alstyne); Solitude (Ellington); Baby, Won't You Please Come Home (Williams); Mood Indigo (Bigard, Ellington); Say It Again (Blondie); Persuasion (Procope) (12 in. LP London HA-D2013—\$7s. 6½d.)

(Am. Dot)—Procope (alto); Paul Jordan (pno); Earl Backus (solo gtr); Remo Biondi (gtr); Mel Schmidt (bass); Frank Rullo (drs). Early 1956. U.S.A.

Russell Procope has been with Duke Ellington since 1945. Prior to that he worked with such other famous bandleaders of the 'thirties as Fletcher Henderson, Benny Carter and Kirby.

Not that you'd think so from this record. It presents (and I use that word advisedly, because the whole atmosphere reeks of playing to order for a more "commercial" market than would be expected from Procope) the forty-eight-year-old altoist as a fine technician, but with a tone not unlike that of the late Freddy Gardener, and a style that at its best gets near to Hodges, but is too often as cloying as the tone.

The accompanying rhythm section is just indifferent, with Earl Backus brought in for the guitar solos. E.J.

#### ★Shorty Rogers and his Giants

Isn't It Romantic (Richard Rodgers); Trickley-didder (Rogers); Oh, Play That Thing (Rogers); Not Really The Blues (Rogers); Martians Go Home (Rogers); My Heart Stood Still (R. Rodgers); Michele's Meditation (Rogers); That's What I'm Talking About (Rogers) (12 in. London LP LTZ-K15023—\$7s. 6½d.)

(Am. Atlantic)—Rogers (tp); Jimmy Giuffre (clt, tenor, bar); Pete Jolly (pno); Curtis Counce (bass); Shelly Manne (drs). March, 1955. Hollywood.

This is a West Coast production, and in his sleeve note Mr. Nesuhi Ertegun takes up over seven hundred words to claim that it refutes (I quote his words) "the serious charge . . . that because of their fascination with the new systems and (to jazz) alien theories, the modernists of the Pacific Coast have forgotten what jazz is, and that both in their writing and their playing the 'essence' of jazz becomes so diluted you couldn't find it with a microscope".

All right, admitted. The record has the "modern" sound, but it isn't carried to extremes, and while it hasn't the heat of earlier jazz that still pervades much East Coast-

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produced jazz, it is neither neurotic nor enervating, and in its way it swings; and that puts Mr. Ertegun in the clear in saying of this LP something most of us have already noted from others.

More to the point to my mind, however, is that we get Shorty Rogers not merely with an all-star group, but one with which he has worked regularly in the Hollywood area, and the resultant understanding between its members has been a very recognisable aid in getting the clever and (despite Mr. Ertegun) easily identifiable West Coast-style arrangements of Mr. Rogers' heard at their best. Rogers plays solid, convincing trumpet; Giuffrè's reed work is superb. In Pete Jolly we have a pianist who, like the earlier mentioned Hank Jones, should go right to the top; and Mr. Rogers couldn't have found two better rhythm section men for his purpose here than Curtis Counce and Shelly Manne. E.J.

#### \*"The Six"

\*\*\*Take Six (Tommy Goodman); *Porky's Blues* (Wilber); *St. James Infirmary* (Primrose); *A Foggy Day* (Gershwin); *Little Girl Blue* (Rodgers); *Riverboat Shuffle* (Voynow); *Music To Sin By* (T. Goodman); *Between The Devil And The Deep Blue Sea* (Arlen) (Columbia-Clef LP 38C9028—29s. 64d.)

(Am. Norgran)—*Bob Wilber* (tr, in); *Johnny Glaser* (p); *Porky Cohen* (mb); *Tommy Goodman* (pno); *Bob Peterson* (bass); *Eddie Phyle* (dvs). Probably 1964. U.S.A.

Only six men, but they manage to play just about every jazz style there is. They range from Dixieland (*Riverboat Shuffle*) to modern jazz (*Music To Sin By* and *Take Six*), not forgetting to include a spot of Count Basie (*Between The Devil*). Certainly this must be the most versatile jazz group of all time.

Johnny Glaser stands out among the soloists. His best trumpet work is heard in *St. James Infirmary* and *Music To Sin By*. Porky Cohen blows a rugged, fierce trombone in *Porky's Blues*. Bob Wilber (he has studied with both Sidney Bechet and Lennie Tristano) plays fine clarinet in *Riverboat Shuffle* and coolish tenor on other tracks. E.J.

#### \*Joe Wilder

\*\*\*Cherokee (Noble); *Prelude To A Kiss* (Ellington); *My Heart Stood Still* (Rodgers); *Six BH Blues* (Cadena); *Mad About The Boy* (Coward); *Damn That Dream* (Van Heusen, De Lange) (12 in. London LP LTZ-C15027—87s. 64d.)

(Am. Savoy)—*Joe Wilder* (tr); *Hank Jones* (pno); *Wendell Marshall* (bass); *Kenny Clarke* (dvs). 19/1/1964. New York.

They call this "Wilder 'n' Wilder", but in fact there's nothing wild about it. It's just American Savoy Records taking the initiative to give trumpet player Joe Wilder his first LP in his own right.

Wilder has crammed a long and varied career into his thirty-two years, but it's all listen in the sleeve note, and all I need do is remind you that for a time he was with Count Basie. He played in the December 1953-recorded "Basie Dance Session, No. 1" (Columbia-Clef 39CX 10008) and was a member of the band Basie brought to Europe in the spring of the following year. He's become a superlative trumpet player. He has a full, rich, forthright tone; a style that is basically mainstream, but never seems old-fashioned; and is at once lyrical and swinging. His ideas are refreshingly enterprising, and he gives out with a confident, driving sureness that keeps one's attention riveted.

That Jones man is again fine, and he, Wendell Marshall and Kenny Clarke make a fine accompanying team. E.J.

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### OTHERS

(Noted by E.J.)

#### \*\*\*Wild Bill Davison

They call this LP "Pretty Wild." Actually it's anything but. The fifty-year-old Dixieland cornettist from Ohio is presented in a Bobby Hackett-Jackie Gleason setting, and it's no more a beano than it fits. He hasn't Hackett's finesse or suitability for the kind of thing, nor can the accompanying orchestra compare with Mr. Gleason's.

Best thing is the choice of tunes. Among the twelve are such well-known evergreens as *If I Had You/Blue Again/When Your Lover Has Gone/Sugar/Sweet And Lovely/Rockin' Chair/She's Funny That Way/Ghost Of A Chance*. (Philips BBL7104.)

#### \*\*\*Nisse Engström Trio

*Bel Ami/Destination Moon/I Found A New Baby/Groovin' Doctor* introduce Sweden's satin-fingered Erroll Garner. You're definitely on at our next soirée, Nisse. (Esquire EP101.)

#### \*\*\*Slim Gaillard

Sing-swing comedian Slim Gaillard, with a lusty, more-or-less swing band, puts the accent less on swing and more on comedy. Could be amusing when seen, but for listening not a patch on Slim's wonderful J.A.T.P. performance, reviewed July. Tunes (added for those who may like innocent, nursery fun): *Yo Yo Yo/Chicken Rhythm/I'm In The Mood For Love/Go, Man, Go*. (Columbia-Clef SEB10046.)

#### \*\*\*Lars Gullin Sextet

For F.J. Fans Only/*Late Summer*. The Swedish stars live up to their reputation for being coolly collected and musically mature. But their idea of "modernism" has today become yesterday's. (Nixa Jazz Today NJE1021.)

#### ?!?!Bill Haley's Comets

*Green Tree Boogie/Sundown Boogie/Juke-box Cannonball/Icy Heart*. Just to let you alligators know that Mr. Haley's on the rock 'n' roll again, wailing his ticky dog ditties as gassily as ever. (Interpreter available at most leading Rock 'n' Roll Institutions.) (London RE-F1058.)

#### \*\*\*Lionel Hampton

*Blues For The Hot Club De Lili/I've Found A New Baby*. Recorded in France. Hampton not very interesting and the plodding accompaniment less so. (Feisted ESD9026.)

*Airmail Special/Baby Don't Love Me No More*. Recorded in America (Summer, 1956). Hamp better, big band with him swings much more. But it doesn't reveal a worth-while soloist, is rough and untidy and isn't really worthy of Mr. H. But then his supporting casts so seldom are. (Columbia-Clef SEB10045.)

For Hampton at the best see review of Hampton-Tatum-Rich Trio on p. 230.

#### \*\*\*Ted Heath and his Music

"Rodgers For Moderns"—a follow-up to Ted Heath's "Gershwin For Moderns" and "Kern For Moderns," and in every way as good. But it could hardly be otherwise with such tunes to inspire the Heath arrangers and musicians as *Have You Met Miss Jones/There's A Small Hotel/It's Easy To Remember/My Heart Stood Still/Down By The River/Thou Swell/The Lady Is A Tramp/Where Or When/It's Can't Be Love/I Married An Angel/The Blue Room/Dancing On The Ceiling*. And that still leaves enough by the great Richard for yet another "Rodgers For Moderns" Vol. Please oblige, Mr. Heath. (Decca LK4148.)

#### \*\*\*Russell Jacquet and his All Stars

Russell Jacquet (trumpet-playing brother of Illinois takes his nine-piece band-swinging through *King Spinner, Eight Ball, Bongo Blues* and *Tropical Fever*, the last two in Afro-Cuban style. Good solos from Henry Coker (sax), "Bumps" Myers (tr), Maurice Simon (bar), Gerald Wiggins (pno) and Jacquet himself. (Parlophone GEP8585.)

#### \*\*\*Bobby Jasper All Stars

France's best contemporary-mode jazz tenor saxist/flautist to be heard here on records is well supported by compatriots René Urtreger (pno), Sacha Distel (tr), Benoît Quersin (bass), Jean-Louis Viale (dvs) as they improvise, with good musicianship, commendable style, and individually no little imagination, on *Bag's Groove/Milestones/Minor Drop/I'll Remember April/You Stepped Out Of A Dream/I Can't Get Started/Night In Tunisia/Memory Of Dick* (a Jasper "original"). Had the treatments been more varied, this might have been a four-star disc. (Feisted PDL85017.)

#### \*\*\*Harry Klein Quartet

*Liggin/I Ain't Necessarily So/Four And No One More Done That Dream*. Klein's thoughtful and sensitive baritone and stylish piano solos by Derek Smith make this EP a good proposition for those interested in the contemporary mode not taken to extremes of "futurism". (Nixa Jazz Today NJE1022.)

#### \*\*\*\*Carmen McRae

"Torchy" is the apt name given to this second Carmen McRae LP which is at least the equal of her first, reviewed at length last September. Recorded December, 1955, it has such deservedly favourites as *Midnight San/Yesterday/We'll Be Together Again/I'm A Dreamer/Sit Eyes/Ghost Of A Chance* as well as half a dozen less familiar, but equally haunting ballads. Accompaniments by large orchestras with strings, directed by Jack Pleis and Ralph Burns, are (except for the few exquisite trombone solos) less individual than those by last time's small groups, but in their suave, unobtrusive way are satisfyingly adequate. (Brunswick LAT8183.)

#### \*\*\*Oscar Peterson

The Canadian-born keyboard notability, backed by arrangements by Russell Garcia who also directs the large, lush string orchestra, is "In A Romantic Mood" with a dozen attractive tunes, including *Stars Fell On Alabama/Black Coffee/Laura/The Boy Next Door/Our Walks/Tenderly/I Only Have Eyes For You/Stella By Starlight/A Sunday Kind Of Love/It Could Happen To You*. Hardly for Mr. Peterson's jazz-minded admirers, but recommended to all others. (H.M.V. CLP1086.)

#### \*\*\*Buddy Rich

"Buddy Rich Sings Johnny Mercer"—and that means yet another great jazz instrumentalist is fancying himself as a vocalist. And he could be a hit at it, too. His fine sense of rhythm and style come out in the brisker swing songs and slower ballads alike, and he doesn't overstep the sex angle. His voice *per se* isn't worth mentioning. But that may not matter. As a colleague put it to me, remember Nat Cole.

Included in the twelve Mercer songs are *Stylarh/Accomplishments/For The Positives/For The Blues In The Night/Too Marvelous For Words*. Buddy Bregman, who was responsible for the large orchestra accompaniments for Ella Fitzgerald's best-selling Cole Porter albums, officiates in similar capacity. (H.M.V. CLP1092.) I take this opportunity of correcting an error made last month. Mr. Porter is of course white, not coloured.

(Noted by O.K.)

#### \*\*\*Sidney Bechet

*Everybody Loves Saturday Night/Laura/Dardanella/Willow Weep For Me*. (All with Andre Rewellott Band.) Average Bechet. *Dardanella* is better than might be expected, but generally the whole set lacks any sort of crispness. And why must Bechet play these dowry ballads? (Vogue WP1149.)

#### \*\*\*Lonnie Donegan Skiffle Group

*Bring A Little Water, Sylvia/Dead Or Alive*. If Donegan doesn't get perilously near Stan Freberg's take off of Donegan and Elvis Presley, he certainly does to Presley. His sincerity is obvious, so is his shyness, both of which should sell the record, though as jazz it's much below par. (Nixa N15071.)

#### \*\*\*Jack Lidström Dixielanders

*I've Got A Feeling I'm Falling/Snag It/Strutin' With Some Barbecue*. More jazz while you work—this time from Sweden. Clarinet much too polite, more like early Jimmy Dorsey, and the whole atmosphere of *Snag It* is listless. I will say this though—the leader has good command through all registers of his trumpet. (Nixa Jazz Today NJE1020.)

#### \*\*\*Bob Scobey's Band

*In New Orleans/Ten To One/It's Tennessee*. (Recorded circa late 1955 in the Jenny Lind Hall, Oakland, California.) Average West Coast bigish band trad. jazz, rather campish. Good party stuff, but for the price I'd want more than that. (Columbia-Clef LPI0088.)

# CONTINENTAL RECORDS

By LILIAN DUFF

Those who saw and enjoyed the Italian film "Neapolitan Merry-Go-Round", with its lively street scenes, whirling dancing and charming traditional songs, will certainly welcome a new LP collection, "Old Napoli" (Durium DLUG6026). The eight songs range from the Ritornello of the lavender seller, dating from about 1200 A.D., to the gay and delightful *Oilù, Oilà* (1890). Two of the authors or composers are unknown; best-known of the others are Salvatore Rosa and Donizetti. The subjects reflect life in the teeming streets and episodes in the city's picturesque past. The most melodramatic is the ballad of the Turkish raid, with its violence and ravishing and the suicide of an unfortunate victim too ashamed to face her lover. This legend, so briefly sketched in *Michelamma* (Salvatore Rosa, 1600), was one of the most effective in the film. All eight songs are sung most attractively by **Roberto Murolo**. The publishers also deserve special praise for the sleeve, complete with the words of all the songs and a very pleasing reproduction of an old painting of the Bay of Naples.

The charm of "Old Napoli" is effortless. "Happy Music from Italy, Vol. 2" (Durium DLUG6028) works too hard for it. Whereas the first volume had its pleasant moments, the effect here is mechanical. If you don't mind this, you may like hearing **Marino Marini** and his Quartet, with **Ruggero Cori** supplying what the trade rather distressingly calls "vocals",

rattling through pieces like *Zingarella*, 'Na Voce, 'Na Chitarra and *La Panse*.

A third collection from Italy is "10 Canzoni di Successo" (Parlo. CPMD8), sung by **Giorgio Consolini**. His voice is warm and caressing, but with the possible exception of *Il Valzer della Strada*, I don't care for most of the songs.

From Latin America come "Paraguayan Songs No. 3", by **Los Paraguayos** (Philips BBR8090). This time the guitars and Indian harp are given an orchestral accompaniment. Fortunately, it isn't overdone and the Indian harp still pours out enough melodious rills to keep me (and I hope others) happy. Rather oddly, the harp solo is the least successful—probably because the conventional prettiness of *Madrecita* doesn't lend itself to an instrument so exotic. The Indian harp is heard more characteristically in *Che Mboe Jharepe*. All three artistes are heard to particular advantage in *Bajo al Cielo del Paraguay* and the guarania called *India*. These three LP collections of Los Paraguayos may be warmly recommended to anyone not yet acquainted with Paraguay's fascinating folk music.

Latin America again in the quartet **Los Incas** (Philips BBE12072). Here the instruments are the maracas, guitar and small Indian flute. The combination is less pleasing to my taste than that of the Paraguayans, but for enthusiasts worth adding to the library.

## TECHNICAL TALK

By P. WILSON, M.A.

### Alignment and Side Pressure

During the past month news has reached me that the American market looks askance at pickup arms which require a spindle overlap of half an inch or so. The idea apparently is held by some that overlap introduces side pressure. That is a complete fallacy, as can easily be seen by drawing the triangle of forces that act upon a stylus when it is tracking in an unmodulated groove. The friction of the record upon the stylus is counterbalanced partly by a stress in the arm and partly by a pressure of the groove wall. It is this latter which one knows as side pressure and it is there with all swivelling arms whatever the overlap.

Now it is easily demonstrated by the same process that the pressure varies as the tangent of the angle which is the sum of the angular offset and the tracking error. If there is a small offset (and larger but more variable tracking error) the side pressure is decreased but becomes variable across the record. Fortunately, it has its smallest value at the inside groove since there the tracking error will be least. On the other hand, if an arrangement is used to give a virtually zero error across the record the side pressure is the same at all points, but its value is roughly 25% more than when no overlap is used.

Tracking error introduces intermodulation distortion. But so also does side pressure, and in each case the amount of distortion is greatest at the inner grooves. We are thus between the devil and the deep sea. What is the best compromise? Obviously if we could cancel out side pressure by some static process the position would be more comfortable. Well, we can do that by the process known as dynamic levelling. This involves tilting the turntable through an angle so that the stylus has to move uphill, as

it were. I will describe the method in a moment. But first of all let me notice two disadvantages. The first is that in practice one finds that to cancel out the side pressure completely quite a substantial tilt is required and to some people this seems to look wrong. The second is that the amount of tilt is different for 78 r.p.m. and for 33½ r.p.m., for the simple reason that the record friction is not the same in the two cases.

In my experience there is something to be said for a little compromise here. If we use rather less than the linear offset of 3½ in., which I referred to in September, we can reduce the appropriate amount of overlap quite appreciably. We can still set up the arm so as to give zero error at the inner grooves, though rather larger error at the outer grooves where it does not matter so much. And if we do this, the process of dynamic levelling requires less motor-board tilt.

I find that satisfactory alignment can be secured if the linear offset is between 3 in. and 3½ in. It is possible to calculate the best overlap for the several cases. Thus if the length of arm between stylus and back pivot is 8 in. the overlap for a 3½ in. offset would be 0.8 in., but only 0.4 in. for a 3 in. offset, and 0.65 for a 3½ in. offset. For a 9 in. arm the corresponding overlaps are 0.7 in., 0.57 in. and 0.35 in.

I only give these figures as a guide, because whatever the offset within this range of values the best method of setting up the arm is that which I described in September which ensures that there is a zero error at a radius of 2.5 in.

### Dynamic Levelling

The first requirement for dynamic levelling is a record which has no run-in or run-out grooves, or alternatively an old single-sided

record with nothing inscribed on the back. If you do not possess such a record you had better scour round second-hand junk shops where they are often to be found.

The object of the method is to make the stylus stay put, with neither inward nor outward swing, when it is gently put down on the outer and then on the inner unrecorded surfaces. But keep your hand over the pickup lest it be ejected from the surface of the record!

If the turntable is statically level, as it would be if levelled in two directions at right angles by means of a spirit level, and if the back bearing which permits the pickup to track across the record (the "vertical bearing") is exactly vertical, then there will be a tendency for the stylus to move inwards when the turntable is set going, but slightly more at the outside edge than at the inside. It is this tendency that causes side pressure. To cancel it one can either tilt the back bearing or the turntable or both. The best method is to tilt both, so that the back bearing is still at right angles to the turntable and the stylus therefore enters squarely into the groove.

To lower the back of the motor board where the vertical bearing is situated, or raise the right-hand side, is all that is required. Use bits of cardboard as temporary packing for the purpose. With patience it is possible in all cases to get an exact dynamic balance for any particular turntable speed. In practice, however, it is wise to leave just a very slight inward swing.

For a permanent set-up I prefer to have a motor plate mounted on a separate motor board. First of all, I level the motor board statically with two small spirit levels at right angles; and after that I level the motor plate dynamically on the motor board, using rubber strips as packing. Having done this, one can henceforth check the levelling of the motor board by the spirit levels with an assurance that the turntable will then be dynamically levelled.

This system, of course, is particularly valuable when the record player is on a trolley or a drawer, or is otherwise moved about.

In my experience, this is the only sure way of avoiding side pressure. It is significant that in the old days we found it an essential if fibre needles were used. The process made a spectacular difference to the standing-up of fibre points. That is a sure sign of reduced stress between record and stylus.

### Service

A month or two ago I mentioned the problem I had had to face at my new home in the erection on a very old building of fringe area T.V. and V.H.F. (F.M.) aerials; and how that problem had been efficiently dealt with for me by the Imhof Service Department.

That experience led me to ponder over the questions that arise in connection with the servicing of modern radio and sound reproducing equipment, and it so happened that almost simultaneously my own standard amplifier, which had given good and heavy service for well over twelve months began to splutter and then packed up. I was soon able to run the fault to earth in the rectifier valve. To me the symptoms were clear and definite and showed that the trouble could only be in that valve or its immediately associated components, but I wondered how many people could have made that diagnosis and have set matters right without delay. That consideration led me to include a chapter in my *Gramophone Handbook* on installation and maintenance, but it also convinced me of the importance of having efficient servicemen up and down the country whom the ordinary listener could call in without hesitation, and with some assurance that they would receive adequate service at reasonable cost. I therefore included in the book a positive recommendation to the reader

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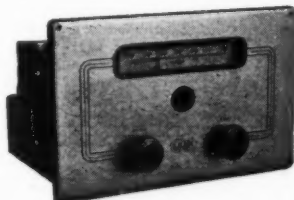
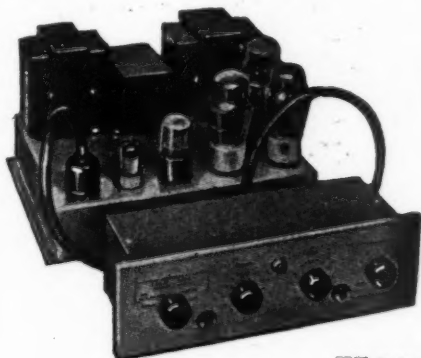
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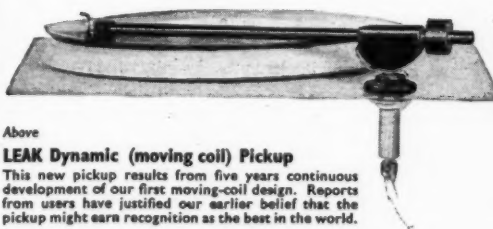
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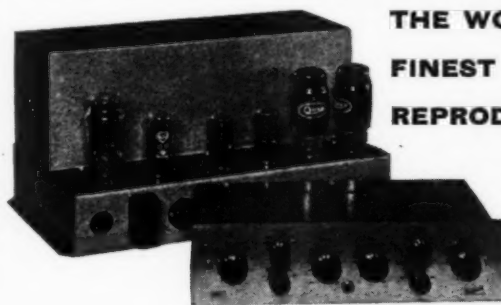
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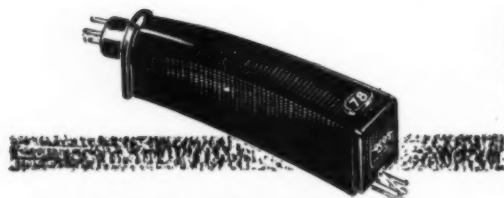
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Now I am well aware that in some parts of the country that may be asking a little too much at present. But I am equally sure, and the increasing number of small display advertisements on the last few pages of *THE GRAMOPHONE* bear me out in this, that centres for the type of service I have in mind are rapidly appearing; they are places where a real interest is taken in quality reproduction of sound and when this is combined also with a real knowledge of the fundamental problems of television reception, an acceptable standard of service can usually be expected.

On paper, the London area, including of course the Home Counties, appears to be specially well catered for. But I wanted to see for myself to what extent the ordinary person could rely on the normal service arrangements. So one day in July I made my way to the service headquarters of the Imhof organisation and asked to be shown how inquiries were handled. I found myself confronted by card indexes, case histories and a radio-equipped service van system which immediately recalled to my mind what I had heard of the Information Room at Scotland Yard and the police cars that are controlled from that centre. Yes, I know that it has been ruled to be illegal to listen-in to the police broadcasts on F.M., but I have in fact done so on a number of occasions to my great entertainment and admiration.

Well, this Imhof service scheme is something like that. It is not yet quite complete and those who are responsible for it are not entirely satisfied with what has so far been achieved; but it is fully working for some of the zones that have been mapped out within a radius of 50 miles or so.

What happens is this. The customer rings up Imhof's, asks for Service and states the need. If the apparatus was originally bought from Imhof's, or has previously been serviced by them, there will be a service sheet filed away. In any case, a service van will probably be working somewhere in the locality and headquarters will contact this by V.H.F. radio and give instructions for a call to be made at the house of the customer.

In this way the customer has the advantage of the services of an expert fully equipped with measuring apparatus, within the minimum time. Usually the fault can be diagnosed and put right within a few hours. But if necessary the instrument can be promptly taken to headquarters for a fuller check to be made.

I watched the system in operation and discussed with Mr. Piggott the idea which he and his joint controller, Mr. Capon, have in mind for the development of the plan. I found myself at a loss to think of any ways in which it could be improved upon. Of course, to be fully efficient and economical it will have to be operated on a fairly large scale, and that is what the organisers are aiming at.

I shall watch the development of this scheme with the greatest interest. It is the most hopeful thing I have yet come across in this field of service, and I feel sure that before long manufacturers as well as customers will come to regard it as a real "boon and blessing to men".

## TECHNICAL REPORT

### The R.C.A. Variable Reluctance Pickup.

Price £14 12s. R.C.A. (Great Britain) Ltd., Windmill Road, Sunbury-on-Thames.

The pickup and arm, which is the subject of this report, is only one of several combinations that are available. Thus there are cartridges with single stylus or dual styli, and with either diamonds or sapphires, or one of each. Then there is a long-arm model as well as a short-arm

model. The former is 9½ in. between centres and the latter 8.4 in.

The model I have had for test is the long-arm, dual sapphire model. Here is the makers' specification.

#### Specification:

D.C. Resistance: 330 ohms.

Impedance at 1 kc/s: 530 ohms.

Capacity: Less than 50pF.

Tracking pressure: (a) Microgroove—5 to 7 grms.; (b) Coarse groove—9 to 12 grms.

Frequency response: Flat from 20 c/s to 16 kc/s within  $\pm 2$  db.

Lateral compliance:  $5 \times 10^{-6}$  cm/dyne.

Equivalent mass at stylus: 4.5 mg.

Optimum Input impedance: 10,000-100,000 oh. s.

Output: 11mv for 1 cm/sec. groove velocity.

First of all, some technical comments on the design. The use of an eight-pole arrangement has the advantage of localising the magnetic flux more effectively than is usual. This means not only less susceptibility to outside interference but also has an output which is several times as high as one normally finds in a variable reluctance pickup of such a long frequency range. Moreover, distortion due to non-linearity is exceptionally low. On the other hand, the equivalent mass at the stylus is somewhat increased by this design, as well as by the shape of the cantilever used with dual stylus model: the two styli are mounted on a single cantilever so that change-over from one to the other can be simply effected by rocking the cartridge through a small angle. This disadvantage is to some extent offset by the reduced lateral compliance of the cantilever, since this acts in series with the record compliance to resonate at a high frequency with the equivalent mass. In the present design the dual stylus model has a small resonance for LP records at about 15 kc/s. For the single stylus model the resonance is claimed to be above 20 kc/s and the equivalent mass 3.5 mg. This must be regarded as a distinct achievement. To better it one would have to reduce the equivalent mass to, say, 2 mg whilst not increasing the cantilever compliance. This can be done in a laboratory model, and with lower output, but so far as I know it has not been done consistently in commercial production.

The lateral compliance at the stylus of  $5 \times 10^{-6}$  cm/dyne is as high as one can reasonably expect in a commercial design. This compliance combines with the equivalent lateral mass of the carrying arm to produce a low note resonance below 20 c/s. The lateral mass can therefore be lower than is usually considered necessary and this means that in this design the side pressure on the groove is correspondingly reduced. The effect of this is two-fold. In the first place, the liability to intermodulation distortion at the inner record grooves is reduced; and in the second place, the liability to groove jumping at a given playing weight is smaller. This latter advantage is, however, offset to some degree by what seems to me to be the rather unnecessarily large stiffness (or small compliance) of the cantilever in a vertical direction. I admit that this adds to the robustness of the assembly, and that I have not had a single case of groove jumping during the many hours that I have used the pickup. But I have had more direct pickup noise than I expect from a cantilever design, and this can only be due to a vertical compliance of considerably less than  $5 \times 10^{-7}$  cm/dyne which ought to be possible. I should add that the "stylus-talk" is not large enough to be distracting: it is just one of those things one looks for as one of the symptoms disclosing effects of the design.

On the whole, I regard this cartridge design as one of the most advanced that I have seen

and the result is a relatively robust affair with a particularly long response range and low distortion.

What about the arm? As readers know, I have in the past had a certain prejudice against light plastic arms. That prejudice does not apply here. The arm is stiff and massive enough to avoid resonance at frequencies where it would be particularly objectionable (e.g. where it would accentuate any motor rumble). According to my measurement, the linear offset of the arm is 3¼ in. For this value, I calculate that the optimum overlap for a 9½ in. arm to give zero error at the inner grooves of a 12 in. or 10 in. LP record (radius 2.5 in.) is 0.54 in. The makers specify 13 mm., which is equivalent to 0.51 in. and the template supplied gives a distance from spindle to back centre of 236 mm., which corresponds to 249 mm. arm length. The discrepancies are inconsiderable, and one may therefore say that with this arm the tracking alignment can be made as near perfection as makes no matter.

So much for the geometry. What about the mechanics? Well, the vertical bearing is of the long sleeve type and gives as smooth a lateral traverse as one could wish for. The horizontal bearings are also smooth and have been arranged at an angle corresponding to the angular offset of the pickup. This is a desirable refinement which is not usually attended to in the design of pickup arms. The counterbalance is provided by a small spring behind the horizontal axis. Some people prefer a mass rather than a spring (or compliance) counterbalance so as to avoid the risk of a resonance at an awkward frequency. But the addition of mass runs a risk of increasing side pressure. Which method is best in any particular case, therefore depends on the other features of design. The R.C.A. arm is so light and the counterbalance spring so small that the advantage of small side pressure seems to have been secured without deleterious effects.

I have gone into all these technical matters in some detail because they illustrate the careful thought that has been given to rather subtle points of design. Another practical example is the position, size and shape of the projecting "finger" which is used for lifting the pickup from the record. I usually find these to be quite awkward for a clumsy person like myself. On this arm the finger has been curved upwards in such a way that lifting the pickup from a record is both positive and without risk.

Perhaps I have already indicated sufficiently in my technical comments what I have found about the performance. But a summary will no doubt be welcomed. Well, here are the salient points.

1. The frequency range of the dual stylus model is very good indeed for a pickup of this type but is not quite equal to that of the best single stylus cartridges. For this one must go to the single stylus model. My ears could not, however, detect any difference in frequency range between this pickup and the best of my standard instruments.
2. Perhaps this was because of the attention that has been given on all counts to the avoidance of side pressure and therefore of intermodulation distortion. For this feature, which I regard as highly important, I give the pickup the highest marks.
3. I found no difficulty whatever in playing even the most difficult records at a playing weight of 5 grms.
4. It is therefore of little moment that I found the vertical compliance to be rather on the small side. It showed itself only in a slight stylus talk. If it had been smaller perhaps a reduced playing weight would have been feasible. But in the circumstances of modern life this would be of doubtful

value owing to the risks of external vibration.

5. The output is unusually large for an electromagnetic design, and therefore permits of direct connection to most high fidelity amplifiers—even those of the "Junior" type which require a 50 mv. input.

This combination of virtues undoubtedly places the new Orthophonic pickup in the front rank. There is, however, one practical matter in which I could have wished for a difference in design. That is in the mounting of the cartridge in the arm. As it is one cannot change or even examine the stylus without removing the arm from the motor board. I could have wished for some simple way of unclipping the cartridge from the arm—as simple, that is, as it is to remove the stylus assembly from the cartridge.

#### Emitec

During recent months I have been trying out the Emitec cleaning papers which E.M.I. have introduced for freeing an LP (Vinyl) record surface from static charges which attract dust. There is no doubt that it does do just that and it also has a useful lubricating effect. I must confess, however, that I hesitate to use it on the surface of a record which has just been taken from a sleeve. Only too often I find that in such a case there is a lot of quite large dust particles on the surface and rubbing with a paper of the texture of Emitec in such circumstances might well cause scratches. I therefore prefer to play through with a Dust Bug first of all and then immediately apply the anti-static of an Emitec pad. In this way the record can be freed and put away clean and virtually 'last free'.

## CORRESPONDENCE

The Editor does not necessarily agree with any views expressed in letters printed. Address: The Editor, THE GRAMOPHONE, The Glade, Green Lane, Stanmore, Middlesex.

#### Do They Take Heed?

It would be interesting to know if the gramophone companies pay any attention to motions, proposed and seconded in your journal, in favour of recording particular works.

I, for one, am not clear whether even the clamour for more records of Bax's music has prompted any action. Certainly the artists have a large say in what they record and it is only natural that their pre-occupation is with the royalties they may expect from a recording—thus we get the nth rendering of Beethoven's 5th or Tchaikovsky's what's-it-called.

But it is also a sound commercial virtue to be first in the field, so will those who have the private ear of Francescatti and Casadesu heed my daring request for a record of that gem of youthful inspiration, the Violin Sonata by Lekeu. Alert minds in the Brixton Road will realise that the young Ferras could also be an admirable interpreter. There are already numerous versions of the Franck Sonata so music in this idiom does sell.

Reaconsfield, Bucks. A. R. P. WRATHALL.

#### Contemporary Couplings

Unlike your correspondent Mr. Harris (October, 1956), I prefer to spend my money on records of music which I would otherwise

hear very rarely, rather than on the "popular classics".

It is a pity, therefore, for people like myself, that the manufacturers have sometimes been guilty of whetting our appetites for a particular composer's work without attempting to follow up a successful issue. For example, after getting to know Balakirev's 1st Symphony from its recording I am still waiting to hear his 2nd Symphony. Szymanowski's 1st Violin Concerto has unfortunately not been transferred to LP, but even the "78" records leave me in no doubt that I would be willing to risk my money on a recording of the 2nd Concerto without hearing the music first, and after hearing the record of Blow's *Venus and Adonis* it is clear that yet another composer is being neglected.

No doubt there is much else to be done first. I would join many of your previous correspondents in suggesting priority for Holst's *Egdon Heath*, and the lack of any recording of *Metamorphosen* is inexplicable. As a Sibelius addict I live in monthly dread that my records will be rendered obsolete by the issue of a superlative Beecham series, although perhaps I need not be too apprehensive when such works as *The Oceanides*, *The Bard* and *Lusnottar* remains unrecorded.

London, S.W.12.

N. D. GOWER.

#### Lieder Reissues

Now that one gramophone company has delved into its archives and produced "Fifty Years of Operatic Singing", perhaps I could be the first to suggest, through your columns, that the same might be done in the (to me, at any rate) even more rewarding field of Lieder singing.

An issue covering even twenty-five years would include so many truly great interpreters of Lieder, and would give those of us who were too young to hear such artists as Elena Gerhardt and Elisabeth Schumann in their prime, an opportunity to indulge in an evaluation of present-day standards which, I maintain, are pretty high.

St. Boswells, Rox. HELEN P. HAMILTON.

#### Select Dozen

Mr. Meadows has provided an interesting list of works he would choose to live with, and I list below the 12 records I would choose.

Mahler—Das Lied von der Erde, with 3 Rückert Songs—Ferrier-Patzak.

Delius—Sea Drift, and Paris—Beecham.

Verdi—Requiem—Frisca.

Beethoven—Symphony No. 9—Toscanini.

Brahms—2nd Piano Concerto—Backhaus.

Fauré—Requiem—Ansermet.

Sibelius—4th Symphony and Tapiola—Karajan.

Dvořák—Cello Concerto—Fournier.

Elgar—Violin Concerto—Heifetz.

In most of these, recordings and performances could hardly be bettered. Only in the last two works would I think rather regretfully of my old 78s of Casals and Menuhin.

Das Lied and Sea Drift would be my first choice, with the Verdi a close third, but the other works are not in order of preference.

Ilford, Essex.

S. C. IRONS.

#### Kirsten Flagstad

I am most grateful to Desmond Shawe-Taylor for putting into print what many of us have been saying for years—"How absurd it is—how pitiful—that we should be reduced to assembling Flagstad's Brünnhilde in bits and pieces". It does indeed seem very likely that complete tapes of her performances still exist. The recording to which he refers was of a performance at La Scala in March 1950. The recording was made available by Radio Italiana, and

broadcast by the B.B.C. on December 26th, 29th and 31st, 1950, and January 2nd, 1951. Besides Flagstad, the cast included Ludwig Weber, Gunther Treptow, Ferdinand Frantz, Hilde Konetzni and Elizabeth Höngen under Furtwängler.

Why couldn't these quite wonderful recordings have been secured and issued by H.M.V.? Faults there were, to be sure, and the usual "noises off" attending "live" broadcasts, but there is always a vividness about these performances which adequately compensated for the minor faults. Or why not issue them on a cheaper label if they are considered to be below top standard? I for one should not complain.

I personally have always fondly imagined that one-day recordings would be found of those incredibly fine Salzburg (1949) performances of *Fidelio* by Flagstad, Patzak and Schwarzkopf under Furtwängler, or even of Flagstad's *Fidelio* performances with Svanholm under Bruno Walter which were broadcast from the Metropolitan in March, 1951, or even... But what's the use? Even if tapes were found there would most certainly be some highly complicated reasons why we who wish to buy them could not do so. I shudder to think that we shall have to tell future generations that we really did hear great performances and that great performances were recorded. How shall we be able to explain the apparently insurmountable difficulties which have robbed them of so many great performances?

London, N.W.1.

C. MOSEY.

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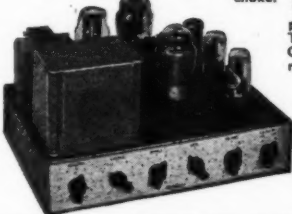
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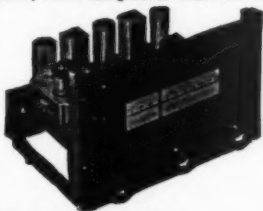
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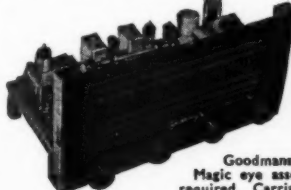


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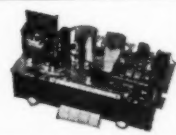


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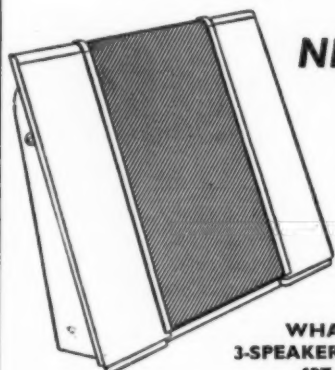
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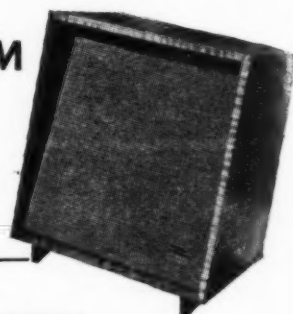
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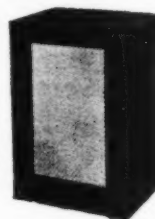


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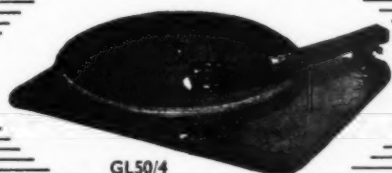


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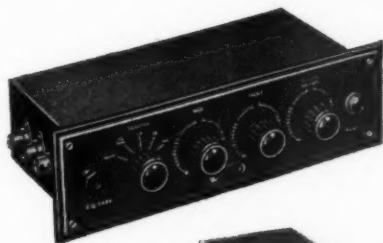
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| Collaro 3 speed Transcriptor | £20 0 0  |

## SPEAKER CABINETS

|                               |          |
|-------------------------------|----------|
| Goodman 12" Corner Cabinet    | £12 12 0 |
| GEC Speaker Cabinet           | £12 12 0 |
| Wharfedale Bronze 10" Cabinet | £14 0 0  |

## SPECIAL OFFER

|                 |         |
|-----------------|---------|
| Collaro AC3/554 | £6 10 0 |
|-----------------|---------|

## TUNERS

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| AM/FM Dulci H4T            | £20 17 0 |
| FMTSL High Stability Model | £17 10 0 |

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| Wharfedale 8CS              | £7 2 0   |
| Wharfedale AL               | £7 6 11  |
| Super 10                    | £8 9 11  |
| Super CSB                   | £8 17 6  |
| Bronze 10 CSB               | £5 11 3  |
| W12                         | £9 15 0  |
| Goodman (Axiom 150)         | £10 15 9 |
| Goodman (Axiom 22)          | £15 9 0  |
| Goodman Axiote              | £6 18 6  |
| Goodman Audiom 60           | £9 2 9   |
| W/B1012                     | £4 19 9  |
| W/B912                      | £4 7 3   |
| W/B812                      | £4 3 6   |
| W/B816                      | £6 18 6  |
| GEC Metal Cone Speaker      | £9 5 0   |
| TSL Lorenz type 312-2       | £14 19 6 |
| Lorenz Treble Speaker LPH65 | £1 19 6  |
| Goodmans Trebax             | £5 9 3   |

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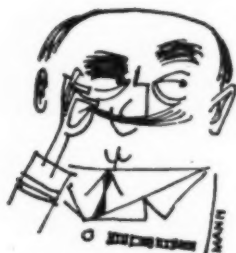
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| Connoisseur pick-up with 2 heads | £13 1 3 |
| Decca pick-up with 2 heads       | £6 15 7 |
| Leak pick-up, 1 head             | £12 1 5 |
| Collaro transcription            | £5 7 5  |
| Goldring 500 cartridge           | £3 9 5  |
| BJ Arm...                        | £3 2 11 |
| Acos GP20, 1 head                | £3 12 0 |

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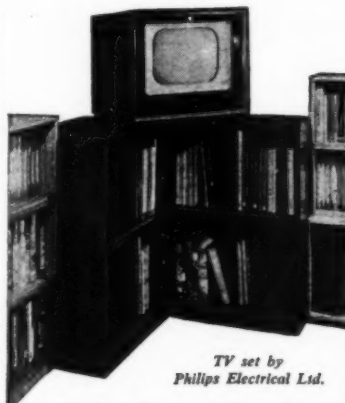
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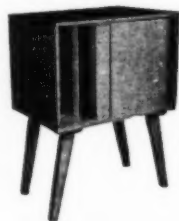
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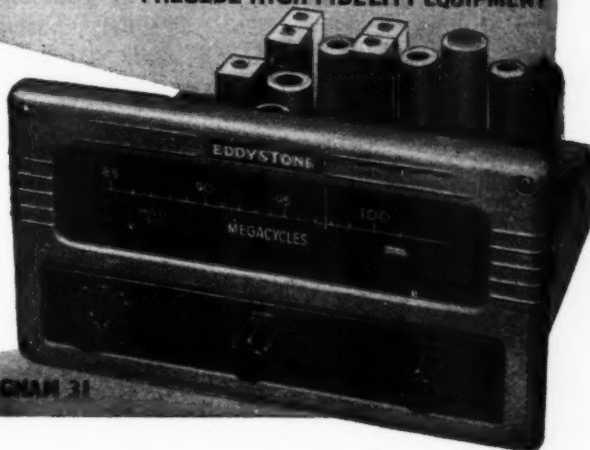
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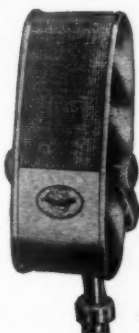
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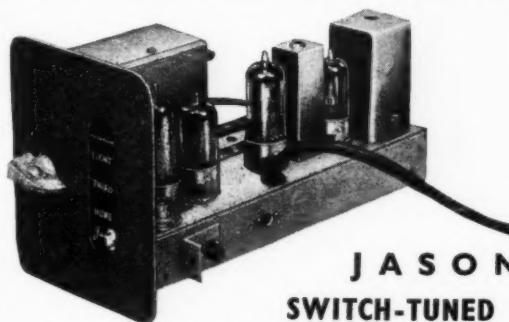
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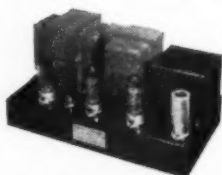
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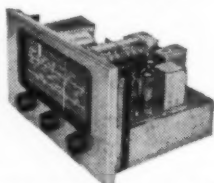
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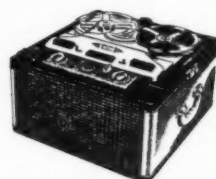
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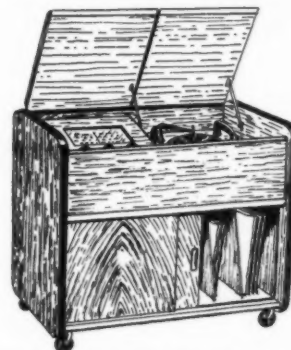
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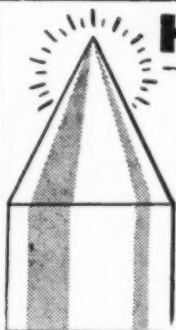
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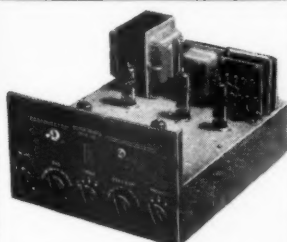
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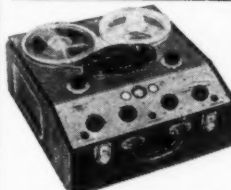
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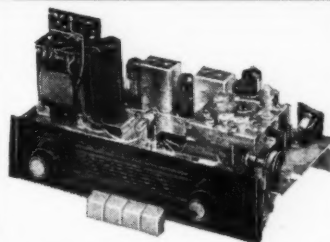
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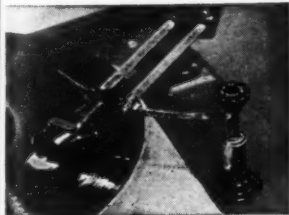
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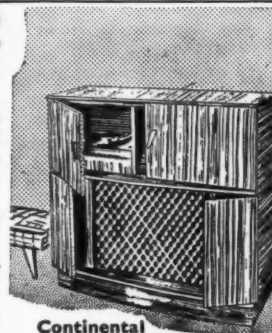
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